

Hafa Adai!

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DOI convenes IGIA; \$29.5M is allocated to US territories. **PAGE 8**

75¢

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Asiana cancels more flights

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
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REPORTER

Asiana Airlines would be canceling more of its regularly scheduled flights—a move the Commonwealth Ports Authority has not prepared for and would ultimately impact their already large revenue loss.

According CPA board chair Kimberlyn King-Hinds, Asiana's further cancellation of flights was not anticipated when the board was deliberating austerity measures and would greatly impact CPA's

See ASIANA on Page 4

'Good or bad, NMI economy is breaking barriers'

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER


House Ways and Means Committee chair Rep. Ivan A. Blanco (R-Saipan) described yesterday the pendulum-like

swing of the CNMI's economy—from a 28.6%-increase in gross domestic product in 2016, followed by a 20%-drop in 2018—as an "unheard of"

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INSIDE



LOCAL

The search for the 2020 Miss Marianas begins, with the pageant scheduled this July.

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NATION

More than 300 American cruise ship passengers are quarantined at military bases.

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ASIA

The story of how Cambodia allowed a cruise ship to dock has taken an unfortunate turn.

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incident was at Dandan Middle School last Monday at around 12pm but no items were reported missing.

The public schools that fell victim were Hopwood Middle School, Garapan Elementary School, and Dandan Middle School. The Department of Public Works office in Lower Base was also broken into.

The most recent burglary in-

At the scene, police met with a school staff who led police to the school's library entrance, where the shutters had been opened.

As officers approached the See SPATE on Page 4

Spate of burglaries on Saipan

KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
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REPORTER

Saipan has seen a surge in burglary and theft cases in the last few days, with a couple of public schools being victimized.

In a short interview, Department of Public Safety spokesperson Dre Panglinan said there are currently no suspects for these burglaries and cannot confirm or deny whether the suspects could be the same for all recent incidents.

The public schools that fell victim were Hopwood Middle School, Garapan Elementary School, and Dandan Middle School. The Department of Public Works office in Lower Base was also broken into.

The most recent burglary in-



'Cutting work hours is last thing we want to do'

By BEA CABRERA
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CORRESPONDENT

With the absence of Chinese tourists and many CNMI hotels already cutting work hours from 40 hours to as

much as 28 hours per week, Hyatt Regency Saipan has yet to follow suit, according to general manager Nick Nishikawa.

"We are not yet there. We still have so many things to do. As general manager, cutting work hours of our employees is the last thing we want to do," he said.

For the moment, the hotel is resorting to maximizing the revenue that is coming in. "For example, if one res-

taurant is having good business, then we try to expand that and make money from there," he said.

This was echoed by Josephine Mesta, Hyatt Human Resources di-

See CUTTING on Page 4

Local

Search for Miss Marianas 2020 begins

Just in time for Women's International Month, young women across the CNMI now have the opportunity to help their community by becoming a positive role model and ambassador to the world with 2020 Miss Marianas pageant scheduled this July.

The islands' nonprofit pageant and talent group, Stellar Marianas, is encouraging 18-27-year-old qualified contestants to join the islands' premier pageant and international competition.

Stellar Marianas is inviting interested applicants to apply by picking up an application at Pena House Boutique in Cha-

lan Kanoa and Iridescent Boutique in Garapan or downloading an application from www.facebook.com/stellarmarianas or emailing stellarqueens@gmail.com.

"This year, we are celebrating 45 years of pageantry in the Marianas, so we are going to come out strong and honor the achievements and progress our women have made over the years, a very larger than life experience," said national director Jaki Fujihira.

Stellar Marianas is also inviting the community to tag or post photos of who they think should be the next Miss Mari-

anas with #nextmissmarianas on Instagram or Facebook.

Rehearsals and preparation will begin soon. Contestants must be between 18 and 25 year old, must be a U.S. citizen, single, not married, no children, and of good moral and ethical character.

Titleholders have the opportunity to represent the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands at an international pageant as well as have the support and resources to be an active community volunteer.

Contestants will receive a Stellar Marianas beauty bag, hair and make up train-

ing sessions, nutrition and fitness training, model portfolio, media interview and public speaking training sessions, opening number outfit and swim wear from Stellar Marianas.

Miss Marianas 2020 could win: crown, trophy, sash and flowers, \$1,500 cash, all expense paid travel opportunity to compete at international pageant, all expense paid travel opportunities, one year use of a brand new car, a brand new smart phone, one-year supply of beauty products, one-year gym membership, a professional model portfolio, a four-piece luggage set from Stellar Marianas and an opportunity to create and implement a community project under your name assisted by Stellar Marianas.

For more information, email stellarqueens@gmail.com or join Stellar Marianas on Facebook or Instagram @ missnorthernmarianas. (PR)

2019 Miss Marianas Shannon Sasamoto.
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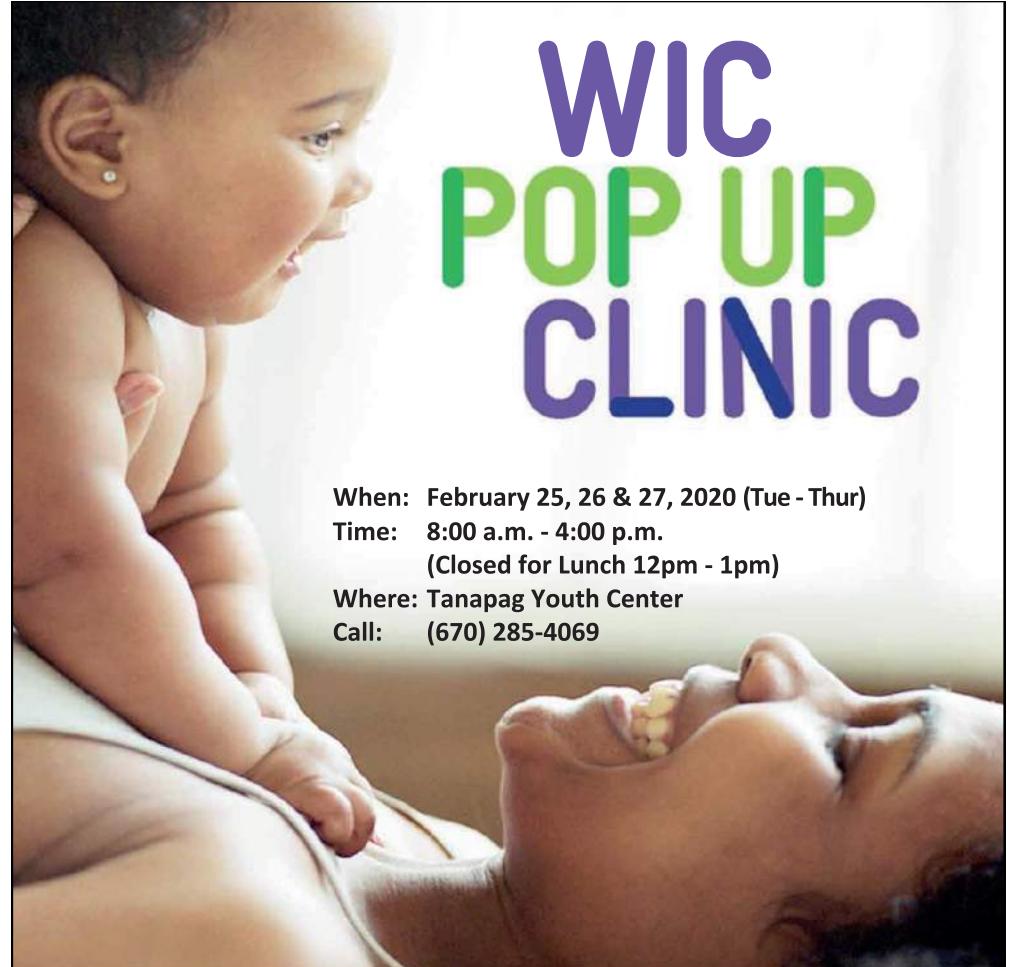
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House OKs internet gaming legislation

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The House of the Representatives passed a bill yesterday that allows senatorial districts to establish and regulate internet gaming.

With an 11-8 vote, House Bill 21-31, House Draft 1 now goes to the Senate for action.

Those who voted "no" were Reps. Sheila Babauta (Ind-Saipan), Antonio SN. Borja (R-Tinian), Richard Lizama (Ind-Saipan), Donald M. Manglona (Ind-Rota), Janet U. Maratita (R-Saipan), Edwin Propst (Ind-Saipan), Edmund Villagomez (Ind-Saipan), and Joseph A. Flores (Ind-Saipan).

Rep. Christina Sablan (Ind-Saipan) is currently off-island but voted against it the first time it came up last year.

"My position on internet gaming is clear: I am firmly

» Reps. Babauta, Maratita say bill will open can of worms

opposed," Sablan told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday through text messages.

Sablan said the CNMI simply does not have the capacity to regulate and manage internet gaming in the Commonwealth.

"Do we imagine that somehow internet gaming will be easier to control? ... Families across our community have been torn apart by gambling addiction. Internet gaming promises to worsen that, because it would make access to gambling even easier, as easy as picking up a cell phone or tablet in the privacy of the home, without any interventions, nor any protections for minors. That's what worries me," Sablan said.

Babauta questioned how much the CNMI will make from this venture, considering that the people running internet gaming are not required to have a business license here, nor will they be required to use any of the banks here, or any banks in the U.S. for that matter.

Babauta said it is very important that this kind of enabling legislation "is responsible and it is complete."

"Enforcement is hard to conduct here in the CNMI. Everyone has issues. Enabling legislation is important to be complete and responsible, requiring all the data and studies for us to make that kind of de-

cision," Babauta said.

She said this bill makes it appear that gambling is the only way leaders can make

money here in the CNMI.

Babauta agreed with Maratita that "it is a can of worms." "No studies conduct-

ed. Impact is unknown," she said. "I will not support something that would encourage the kind of negative behavior

and mental health crisis that we are already experiencing. I think we can do better. I know we are better. We are very

unique. We are smart. We are creative. I think there are other better ideas."

See GAMING on Next Page

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Nearly 60% of 130 stranded tourists return home

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
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REPORTER

The Commonwealth Ports Authority reports that nearly 60% of the 130 stranded tourists have returned home and those who remain are set to return home soon.

According to CPA board chair Kimberly King-Hinds, nearly 80 of Hong Kong Express Airway's passengers who were left behind have departed Saipan as of yesterday.

ASIANA

From Page 1

revenue collection.

Asiana Airlines announced last Monday the cancellation of its morning flights from Feb. 27 to Feb. 29 and the morning flights from March 4 to March 18. Their afternoon flights will continue normal operations.

Although she couldn't say yet how much of an impact the cancellations would bring to CPA, King-Hinds said she is sure CPA will return to the drawing board to deliberate on austerity measures and to discuss additional cuts if needed.

"It will definitely have an impact,

GOOD

From Page 1

development but it will ultimately come down to how the Commonwealth will deal with this large drop in the economy.

"In any way, we're breaking barriers. I don't know what economy in the world swings from very high 28.6% to a very low 20% in GDP," said Blanco, referring to the new U.S. Government Accountability Office report about the CNMI economy.

The GAO report stated that, although the CNMI economy grew in 2016 and 2017, it plunged in 2018 due to a sharp drop in tourist spending and casino gaming revenue following Super Typhoon Yutu's severe destruction in October 2018.

GAO said the U.S. Department of Commerce's Bureau of Economic Analysis reports that the CNMI's

King-Hinds said CPA expects that all of the remaining stranded passengers will be returning home in the next week or so.

The action to repatriate the 130 stranded tourists was taken following the joint effort of CPA and the CNMI government to reach out to Hong Kong Express Airways last week.

Last week, CPA took it into its own hands to reach out to Hong Kong Express even though the issue was out of CPA's jurisdiction. CPA also

which means we have to go back to the drawing board to see what the numbers look like. If the numbers call for an additional cut, the board will have to meet again to deliberate on where we can cut," she said.

King-Hinds said Asiana cancelled more flights due to low passenger loads.

According to *Saipan Tribune* archives, low passenger loads is a worldwide trend at the moment, especially with the outbreak of the novel coronavirus that has provoked fear in people around the world.

Before the cancellation of Asiana's morning flights, CPA airport and financial committees reported an overall projected loss of \$3.9 million,

GDP grew 28.4% in 2016 and 25.5% in 2017, which reflected continued growth in visitor spending, particularly for casino gaming. GAO said the GDP, however, fell by 20% in 2018, with a sharp drop in tourist spending and casino gambling revenues following Yutu's destruction. According to the Bureau of Economic Analysis, revenue from casino gambling dropped over 50% in 2018.

Blanco believes the CNMI's GDP was about negative 19% in 2011 but that number was later adjusted. "At that time, we felt it. We felt the pain. Our export, which is mainly on the tourism sector, was hit hard," he said.

Now with this coronavirus outbreak, the CNMI is getting hit as well in the midst of recovery from Yutu's devastation in 2018.

Once the GDP shows either a 5% growth or 5% decrease, that's already very significant.

slashed open and items reported missing include a small amount of money, office supplies, a Sony wireless headphone, and a Samsung A30 cellphone.

Upon arriving at the scene, police met with security personnel who stated that multiple temporary classrooms had been cut open. According to the security, their last security perimeter walk was conducted at about 3am and, at that time, no tents had been damaged yet.

When security conducted another walk around the campus at about 5:30am, they noticed a few tents had been slashed open and immediately called for police assistance.

Police also responded to a burglary and theft incident at the DPW accounting office in Lower Base last Monday at about 7:29am.

Items reported missing include a few company checks worth about \$2,500 and approximately \$4,000 in cash.

took it upon itself to contact the U.S. Customs and Border Protection to inform them of the issue regarding the stranded tourists who would have been overstaying and could do nothing about it.

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres also wrote the mother company of Hong Kong Express Airways last week to express grave concern for the travelers who were left stranded in the CNMI after Hong Kong Express suspended flights to and from the CNMI.

including revenue loss from flights and others. Specifically, revenue loss from the four China flights was at an estimated \$2.2 million.

To cope with that loss, the CPA board voted yes on an across-the-board cut of eight hours in employees' work hours. That would reduce all airport employees to 72 hours each payroll. The board also agreed upon a total freeze on hiring, travel outside of the CNMI, merit increases, overtime, and more.

The austerity measures that the board agreed upon was supposed to take effect on March 1, but it is now subject to change since CPA must return to the drawing board to discuss further austerity measures.

"But for us, it's 20%," Blanco said. He likened it to the Biblical tale of Joseph and his dream about Egypt going through "seven years of plenty and then seven years of famine."

Blanco said he does not know whether the CNMI is in the seven years of famine after having steady economic growth from 2012 to 2017, but whether the CNMI is in the midst of seven years of famine, what's more important is how the Commonwealth will deal with the economic whiplash.

He acknowledged that the 64-hour cuts and other cost-containment measures that the CNMI government will implement are going to hurt but, if that's the way the Executive Branch feels that the government needs to handle this 20% drop in GDP, they will work together, especially on how to resolve these issues that the Commonwealth is currently facing.

Once police arrived at the scene, the caller directed them inside the office, where they noticed a gray safe that appeared to be out of place in the hallway. Drawers in a couple of other offices had also been opened, with items scattered throughout the room.

As officers made their way toward the accounting office, they noticed that the doorknob had been forced open, all the drawers had been opened, and a drawer containing a few checks had been pried open.

Further investigation revealed that suspect(s) may have gained entry through a second-floor window.

DPS is encouraging the community to call 911 with any leads on any of these burglary and theft incidents. For those who would like to remain anonymous, call the CNMI Crime Stoppers hotline at 234-7272. Crime Stoppers pays up to \$1,000 for any information leading to an arrest.

Torres stated in his letter that if Hong Kong Express fails to contact his office with immediate plans to repatriate these stranded individuals by last Friday, he will have no choice but to contact the office of the Consulate-General of the People's Republic of China regarding this critical matter.

Hong Kong Express was the only airline that reportedly left behind tourists following flight suspension on Feb. 6 as a result of the novel coronavirus outbreak.

Other airlines that suspended flights due to the novel coronavirus

outbreak were China Eastern Airlines, Sichuan Airlines, and Beijing Capital Airlines.

Sichuan Airlines suspended all flights to the CNMI from Feb. 1 until further notice but provided "ferry-in" and "live-out" service, which means the airline arrived in the CNMI with no passengers and left with travelers.

China Eastern also cancelled all flights from last Feb. 1 until further notice due to the virus.

Beijing Capital Airlines cancelled all flights beginning Jan. 31 until the end of February.

reservations is lost income every single day," she added.

Nishikawa emphasized that staff motivation plays an integral part in a hotel business' daily operation. "If you cut hours, the motivation will go down. It is easy to cut hours but I don't want the staff to have less motivation at work because the guests notice it. ... We have to show a smiling face always," he said.

"We have to do many other things first but, in the end, if we have to do it, everybody will understand the reason for cutting hours and still keep the motivation. Our business is to serve the customer and if motivation drops, guests will notice easily and I don't want that to happen," he added.

In an earlier interview, Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands president Gloria Cavanagh said the decrease in the number of tourists and hotel cancellations were immediately felt in the industry.

"By Jan. 26, we already felt the huge cancellations and sometimes there were, at most, 400 cancellations at one given time. The hotels that rely heavily on the Chinese market are the ones that are going to be affected the most," she said.

"There's not much incentive for people to travel right now, considering the suspension of direct flights from China to the CNMI and the proclamation of President Donald Trump suspending the entry of immigrants and non-immigrants to the United States and territories who pose a risk of transmitting novel coronavirus," she added.

CNMI a hub.

"Why not take part in jumping on that opportunity to prepare the CNMI to be a hub for companies," said Peter, adding that the CNMI can come up with very stringent rules.

House Gaming Committee chair Rep. Ralph N. Yumul (R-Saipan) said no one objected to the bill during committee hearings on Saipan and Rota. Yumul said other states such as Nevada, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Mississippi, New Jersey, New York, and others also allow internet gambling.

In its report on the bill, the House Gaming Committee found no risk with internet gambling if it is properly regulated and sets the foundation that allows for senatorial district to implement and enforce internet gambling within each district.

By allowing internet gaming, the committee said that the CNMI will provide tourists with another form of entertainment and interaction that will allow the Commonwealth to benefit.

CUTTING

From Page 1

rector. "If need be, then hours will be reduced. But as long as we have the customers, we need the staff then and so we run on regular schedules so no one's work hours has been reduced as far as we are concerned," she said.

The decision of four airlines to suspend flights from China and Hong Kong due to the coronavirus outbreak has forced the CNMI government to implement austerity measures and pushed many private businesses to cut work hours.

A hotel in San Roque is still running on regular work hours, though. A cashier in the hotel, who agreed to speak on condition of anonymity, said there have been talks about work hours being cut, but nothing concrete has been done yet. "My position is, it is better to cut work hours that be cut off from work permanently. I know it will only be temporary and I would rather have that than to be unemployed," she said.

According to an Airbnb operator on Capital Hill, they have had zero guests since the first week of February. "We have received a lot of cancellations since most of our guests are from China and Korea. As for new reservations, we have seen many 'likes' under the room information that we have on the website but we have not gotten a solid reservation or booking yet," she said.

"Although maintaining an Airbnb entails low operations cost compared to a hotel, the cancellations and zero

GAMING

From Page 3

Maratita said she is mindful of the CNMI's financial challenges but she is equally mindful of the health and welfare of the people.

"We hear it again, we might bring more poker. So we want it—poker, casino, internet gambling, and e-gaming. Everything. Are we [going to] get all these revenues through gambling and not be mindful of the social ills that it could be creating in our community, especially our kids, especially [in] this time of...financial challenges in our Commonwealth?" Maratita asked.

Maratita said she understands this is a revenue-generating bill, but it is just opening another can of worms.

Rep. Marco T. Peter (R-Saipan), who was among those who voted for the bill, said it's the hub that they're preparing for and not getting companies to come to the CNMI. Peter said this is going to prepare the CNMI because there's interest in making the

House floor leader floats idea of lifting poker moratorium

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

To generate revenue, House floor leader Rep. John Paul Sablan (R-Saipan) is floating the idea of amending the casino law to lift the moratorium on the acquisition of new poker machines on Saipan.

Sablan shared the idea during a House meeting last week, in which members were brainstorming about revenue-generating bills because of the financial crisis caused by the coronavirus outbreak in China.

In an interview, Sablan said the moratorium that they were talking about only affects Saipan, politically referred to as the third senatorial of the CNMI.

He said the moratorium began in April 2015 when it was included in the casino law, Public Law 18-57. The lawmaker said a provision in the casino law caps or disallows any new acquisition of poker machines after April 2015.

Since passing the casino law, Sablan said the operators of poker parlors have had difficulties looking for new locations because Saipan Local Law 18-05 also prevents them from setting up shop in residential areas.

Some businesses that used to operate poker parlors have found buildings where they can expand poker businesses in conforming areas but Sablan said these businesses cannot bring in any new machines because of the moratorium that was placed in the casino law.

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"The idea of lifting the moratorium would essentially allow any new investors that want to do business in poker parlors or even for that matter the existing ones to expand, and avail themselves more poker machines," he said.

Sablan pointed out that every poker machine's annual license fee is \$12,000. Of that amount, \$6,000 goes to the general fund, while the remaining \$6,000 goes to the Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation.

He said that a big chunk of the \$6,000 that goes to the Saipan delegation is appropriated by statute to the Saipan Higher Education Financial Assistance, a scholarship program for Saipan students.

Sablan said the law allows the delegation to appropriate any excess of that money to infrastructures or projects that need to be done on Saipan.

Saipan lawmakers annually appropriate some \$3 million in poker license fees to SHEFA.

Poker businesses pay \$12,500 per poker machine, which translates to at least \$3.75 million if there are at least 300 machines. In recent years, the number of licensed poker machines on the island has plummeted.

The financial crisis the CNMI is having right now with the coronavirus outbreak, which has effectively bottlenecked the entry of Chinese tourists, is why the idea of lifting the moratorium came about, Sablan said.

"We have to be creative and innovative in trying to think of how can we further receive revenues by whatever businesses that we can expand," Sablan said.

Right now, he said, poker businesses cannot expand because of the moratorium outlined in P.L. 18-56. "By lifting that [law], that would allow poker parlors to expand or even create new poker parlors," he said.

The only way to lift that moratorium is to amend the casino law and strike out that provision, Sablan said.

He said that lifting the moratorium is on the table and that most, if not all, House members are considering the idea at the moment.

He said allowing for additional new poker machines would result in new revenue and create more funds for Saipan children that are pursuing higher education.

"It is something that we're [going to] consider," Sablan said.

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Julian Biscocho from San Vicente Elementary School "pushes" Kyokutaisei Takuya out of the sumo circle at the beach side of Hyatt Regency Saipan.
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1 Open or upgrade to a Personal Priority Banking Checking Account and open a new Priority Savings with a minimum deposit of \$30,000 drawn from another financial institution by February 28, 2020 and receive a \$300 statement credit to your savings account. The statement credit will be completed the month following meeting the criteria. Limit of one statement credit per customer or account. Statement credit may be reportable as taxable income (1099-INT). Minimum opening deposit of \$100 (or just \$5 with direct deposit) for Priority Banking 1 and 2, and \$1,000 for Priority Banking 3. Accounts closed or converted out of Priority Banking within 180 days will be assessed a \$75 charge. Accounts with a zero balance for 30 consecutive days will be closed automatically. As of 11/29/19, the Annual Percentage Yield (APY) for a Personal Priority Banking Level 2 checking account is 0.02%, and for Level 3 is 0.04% for daily balances less than \$2,500 and 0.04% for daily balances of \$2,500 or more. The APYs for Priority Savings are 0.02% for daily balances under \$10,000, 0.05% for balances \$10,000 through \$24,999.99 and 0.07% for balances \$25,000 and over. The rates may change after the account is opened. Fees may reduce earnings. The monthly service charge is \$15 for Priority Level 1, \$19 for Level 2, \$22 for Level 3 and \$4 for Priority Savings. Business and corporate accounts do not qualify for this offer.

2 All loans and lines of credit are subject to credit approval. For lines of credit, there is no discount on introductory fixed rates or fixed rate locks unless otherwise indicated in a specific promotion. Home equity lines of credit are not available in CNMI. Cannot be combined with any other offer.

3 Banking services and special benefits depend on the Priority Level you apply for and maintain. These benefits may be lost if account is closed or converted to another type of account. Please see a Priority Banking Plan Checking Account Agreement for specific terms and conditions. The offer cannot be combined with any other discounts, offers, or promotions.

MHS alumnus joins 2 UOG ROTC cadets in paid summer internships



From left, cadets John Bautista, Noel Degracia, and Justin Cayading from the University of Guam's ROTC program were selected for fully paid internships with the U.S. Army this coming summer.

Three cadets in the University of Guam's Army Reserve Officers Training Corps program have been selected for paid internships in the continental United States this coming summer.

Cadets John Bautista and Justin Cayading were selected for a three-week internship with the U.S. Army Test and Evaluation Command at Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland. They will serve alongside a team of Army scientists and technicians who

plan, integrate, and conduct experiments, developmental testing, independent operational testing, and independent evaluations and assessments to provide essential information to U.S. Army acquisition decision makers and field commanders.

Bautista is a business administration major with a concentration in human resource management and a graduate of Father Duenas High School. Cayading is a health sciences

major with a concentration in physical therapy and a graduate of Marianas High School in Saipan.

Cadet Noel Degracia was selected for a four-week internship with the Judge Advocate General's Corps of the U.S. Army with an assignment in Fort Carson, Colo. He will join the 4th Infantry Division's legal office and witness firsthand how the JAG Corps provides legal support for the Army, soldiers, and their fam-

ily members. He will also be introduced to multiple legal practice areas and have the opportunity to shadow judge advocates, witness administrative boards and courts-martial proceedings, observe client meetings, and assist in drafting legal memoranda.

Degracia is a business administration major and a graduate of Simon Sanchez High School.

The U.S. Army's Cadet Command pays for the flights and lodging for the cadets selected for internships, as well as full per diem to cover meals and incidentals.

The University of Guam ROTC program was established in October 1979 and is celebrating 40 years of producing dynamic leaders for Guam, the Pacific, and the United States of America. (UOG)

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT NO. 20-01 United States District Court for the Northern Mariana Islands

Information Technology Security Officer

Permanent, Full-Time Position - Location: SAIPAN, NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS (CNMI)
Starting grade: CL-27 Step 1 \$57,670, to CL-28 Step 25 \$86,403, depending on qualifications.
(Advanced starting grade above CL-28 Step 25 may be available with exceptional qualifications.)
Opening Date: February 3, 2020 • Applications received by February 21, 2020 will be given priority.

Position Overview:

The Information Technology Security Officer (ITSO) develops Information Technology security policy to ensure the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of systems, networks, and data; protected from unauthorized intrusion. The ITSO is responsible for implementing local policies that comply with national IT security standards. At the advanced (CL-28) level the ITSO develops high-level documentation and presentations of security policy, and serves as a team lead to fulfill security objectives. This position reports to the Information Services Manager. Complete position description is available upon request, or via Internet at <http://www.nmid.uscourts.gov>. This position includes full federal employment benefits, with paid leave and holidays, health insurance, life insurance and federal retirement benefits.

Minimum Qualifications and Preferred Qualifications:

High School graduate with two years of specialized experience in a field closely related to these duties, or a bachelor's degree with honors or distinction, or completion of one or more years graduate study in a field closely related to the subject matter of this position; and holder of ComptIA "A+" or equivalent certification. Additional preference will be given for college graduation, advanced work experience directly in this field, and for holders of ComptIA "Networks+", "Security+", "CASP+" or equivalent certifications in the fields of network management and IT security. Applicants should demonstrate sound ethics and judgment, and have superior communication skills.

Citizenship Requirement:

Applicants are required to be U.S. citizens or aliens who are authorized to work in the U.S.

Notice to Applicants:

Excepted service appointments are "at will" and may be terminated by either the court or the employee at any time for any reason. Selectees are subject to a background investigation and suitability determination, and updated background investigations every five years. Employees are subject to the Judicial Code of Conduct. Direct deposit of pay is required.

Application Procedure:

Each applicant is required to submit a Cover Letter, Resume, and an AO-78 application form. AO-78 forms are on the Internet at: <http://www.nmid.uscourts.gov> or may be picked up at the U.S. District Court. Position is open until filled; applications received by February 21, 2020 will be given priority.

Deliver signed applications to:

Clerk of Court
United States District Court
for the Northern Mariana Islands
2nd Floor Horiguchi Bldg, Garapan, Saipan

Or, email signed applications to:

HR@nmid.uscourts.gov

The United States District Court is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Help the US Coast Guard help you



U.S. COAST GUARD
Local free diver receives his dive float from Coast Guard crew last Feb. 5, 2020 in Honolulu. Because of the diver reported the float missing, the U.S. Coast Guard was able to save valuable resources, unneeded search efforts, and was able to return the dive float.

HONOLULU—The U.S. Coast Guard returned a dive float to its owner last Thursday after its recovery offshore last week.

A local free diver lost his dive float and called the Coast Guard Sector Honolulu command center describing the float, when, and where it was lost. The owner credited a local Facebook page with the direction to do so.

"He has some unique text on his dive float like, 'here fishy fishy' and 'one drop, one shot,'" said Cmdr. Ben Gates, deputy commander, Sector Honolulu. "The Sector Honolulu

command center watchstanders logged the call and made a note of the dive float."

Three hours later, the U.S. Coast Guard cutter Joseph Gerczak crew came across a dive float while underway, which is usually regarded as an indication of potential distress. The commanding officer of the ship reported the discovery to the command center, who was able to match the description of the dive float to the one reported missing.

Because of the diver's self-reporting actions, the Coast Guard was able to save valuable resources, unneeded search efforts, and return the dive float to its original owner.

"We advise everyone to label your gear with your name and phone number so the Coast Guard can contact you to determine whether or not someone needs help as quickly as possible," said Gates.

The Coast Guard also reminds waterway users to be mindful of weather conditions. Taking in gear or moving it higher up on the back, such as kayaks and paddleboards during high surf, can lessen the chance them drifting to sea.

The Coast Guard offers free "If Found" decals to mark gear, or you can write directly on it.

The labels can be obtained for free at local harbormasters, through the Coast Guard Auxiliary, from Honolulu Sail and Power Squadron offices and at select marine retail and supply stores. Similarly, if you lose kayaks, surfboards, or safety equipment such as lifejackets and dive floats, report it to the Coast Guard to help search and rescue specialists deconflict possible distress reports. (USCG)

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp
Website: <http://www.nmhcgov.net>

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) Board of Directors, through its Chairman of the Board, is hereby giving notice that the Regular Board Meeting is scheduled on **Thursday, February 20, 2020 – 5:00 p.m. at the NMHC Conference Room, Saipan**. The public is welcome to submit written or oral comments regarding the agenda below. Individuals interested in attending the meeting and needing special accommodations are requested to contact NMHC in advance.

I. PRELIMINARY MATTERS

- a. Call to Order
- b. Roll Call
- c. Adoption of Agenda
- d. Adoption of Minutes

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS

III. CORPORATE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- a. Divisional Update Reports

IV. OLD BUSINESS

- a. CDBG-DR Updates
- b. Personnel Policies and Procedures Updates
- c. Procurement Policies and Procedures Updates

V. NEW BUSINESS

- a. FY 2021 Budget

VI. LEGAL COUNSEL'S PENDING/ONGOING REPORT

VII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

VIII. OTHER MATTERS

IX. ADJOURNMENT

(Note: Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 13(a) (7) and Section 13(c), the Board may vote to meet in executive session.)

/s/ **VINNEY ATALIG HOCOG**
Chairman of the Board

JTB Publishing preparing new Saipan guidebook

A photographer and writer from Japan's JTB Publishing were in the Marianas recently to gather updated information and images for a new Saipan guidebook to be published in March 2020.

RurubuSaipan targets men and women of all age who are interested in traveling to the Marianas. Over 20,000 copies

will be printed, bringing the destination nearly half a million dollars in ad exposure.

"RurubuSaipan will provide all kinds of information helpful for travel to The Marianas, including details on hotels, optional tours, activities, beaches, gourmet, shopping, and more," said Marianas Visitors

Authority managing director Priscilla M. Iakopo. "This guidebook will be a tremendous resource for our Japanese visitors to make the most of their time in our islands."

Eateries visited include Ete Café, 670 Café, Cha, The Shack, Oleai Beach Bar & Grill, Winchell's, The Air-

stream, Surf Club, Johnny's Bar, Godfather's, Coco Restaurant, IHOP, Ina's Kitchen, Loco Taco, Tasty Burger, Mango Six, Salty's, Shirley's

Coffee Shop, and Herman's Modern Bakery. Other sites visited including T-Galleria by DFS, Garapan Street Market, ABC Store, Joeten Hafadai Shopping Center, Sabalu Market, Marianas Creations, Aqua

Resort Club, Kensington Hotel Saipan, I Love Saipan, and Grandvrio Resort Saipan. Scenic and historic sites visited including Sugar King Park, Micro Beach, downtown Garapan, and Capital Hill. (PR)

Any questions about cancer? Watch CHCC's Doc Talk

By JUSTINE NAUTA
justine_nauta@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Health Care Corp. will be livestreaming its second annual Doc Talk on its Facebook page on Feb. 20, starting at 6pm, this time focusing more on cancer treatment and prevention.

The Commonwealth Health Center's oncologist, Dr. Peter Brett, will also be offering his expertise and advice on other health topics.

Interested people will have the opportunity to ask questions about health and wellness during the live event, but if certain people aren't comfortable with submitting questions during the livestream, they can submit questions beforehand by messaging the CHCC Facebook page or submitting a public inquiry form on the CHCC website at <https://www.chcc.gov.mp/>



Brett

ContactUs/contactus.php. This option will be submitted anonymously.

CHCC spokesperson Zoe Travis said that this Doc Talk is very important because people can obtain information and advice from someone who specializes in cancer. She pointed out that there is so much information out in the internet and, most of the time they're false, hence the importance of Doc Talk because the one moderating it is actually an expert on the subject.

Due to the time limit, the questions that will be answered will be selected based on the relevance and number of questions that is submitted. It is to be noted that the provider may not be able to answer all questions and won't

be answering personal or specific health questions and won't offer treatment advice to individuals or attempt to diagnose conditions. It is advised that you shouldn't share personal identification information such as birthdays or medical conditions about yourself or anyone else. Doc Talks aren't meant to replace regular doctor's visits.

Brett is a board-certified medical oncologist who has been providing full time cancer care for the people in the CNMI since May 2019, along with the rest of the cancer clinical team: Dr. Joel Smith, Dr. John Tudela, and nurses Salome Castro and Maria Priest. Brett has also been a full-time oncologist in Northern California for 25 years.



A photographer visits Shirley's Coffee Shop on Jan. 31, 2020, in Garapan, to gather images for the new Saipan guidebook RurubuSaipan, scheduled for publication in March 2020.



A photographer visits Kevin's Prime Rib & Seafood at Aqua Resort Club Saipan on Feb. 1, 2020, to gather images for the new Saipan guidebook RurubuSaipan, scheduled for publication in March 2020.

MVA



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DOI convenes IGIA; \$29.5M is allocated to US territories

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The White House convened last Feb. 11 the 2020 Interagency Group on Insular Areas in a senior plenary session that was attended by territorial governors, lieutenant governors, and members of Congress.

The session was co-chaired by Interior Secretary David Bernhardt and Douglas Hoelscher, White House deputy assistant to the President & director, White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, during which Bernhardt also presented a total of \$29,480,076 in Capital Improvement Project and Technical Assistant Program grant funding for the territories.

"We discussed the constant and urgent pursuit of economic development in our insular areas," said Bernhardt. "This meeting ensures that insular voices and concerns are heard in the Federal government."

At the IGIA this year, the group focused on economic development and insular resilience issues that continue to challenge the governors in each of the territories. "The IGIA allows the governors to communicate what they see as solutions directly to the White House and other federal agencies," said Assistant Interior Secretary Douglas Domenech. continued Domenech.

Bernhardt presented CNMI Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios with \$9.9 million in CIP and TAP grants as follows:

- \$2.9 million for Saipan FEMA projects under the Public Assistance and Hazard Mitigation grant programs related to Super Typhoon Yutu;

- \$1.2 million for the Public School System-specific FEMA projects;

- \$1 million for the construction of the fire alarm/protection and sprinkler systems at the Department of Corrections;

- \$1 million for the construction of the West San Jose waterline on Tinian;

- \$1 million towards the Rota landfill;

- \$949,450 for building renovations for the Commonwealth Disability Center;

- \$649,150 for the continuation of the CIP Program Administration to implement projects from inception to completion;

- \$415,000 for the maintenance of infrastructure projects in the Commonwealth; and

- \$846,476 in TAP grants to review impacts of multiple military programmatic agreements, replaced damaged emergency responder radio repeater system in Rota, and support detection, eradication and preventive measures to counter the coconut rhinoceros beetle.

Bernhardt presented Guam

across the islands of Tutuila and Manua;

- \$1.3 to American Samoa Telecommunications Authority for maintenance and renovations;

- \$1.3 to American Samoa Shipyard Services Authority for the continuation of the slipway replacement project;

- \$1.3 million to Department of Port Authority for the extension of the Malaloa dock;

- \$1 million to the American Samoa Power Authority for heavy equipment; and

- \$800,000 for the completion of the Tafuna Youth Center.

Bernhardt presented U.S. Virgin Islands Gov. Albert Bryan Jr., with \$3.3 million in CIP grants as follows:

- \$2.2 million for new security cameras and for park renovations across the islands of St. Thomas, St. Croix, and

St. John;

- \$1.1 million in redirected CIP grant funds was awarded to support the following entities:

- St. Thomas East End Medical Clinic for architectural and engineering services;

- Schneider Regional Medical Center for purchase of generators; and

- Humpback I and Canarcry Pump Station for rehabilitation.

Federal presenters at the 2020 IGIA included the following officials:

- Dr. John Fleming, assistant secretary of Commerce for Economic Development, who led a discussion on the Department of Commerce's role in supporting economic development in the U.S. territories;

- Carlos Castillo, associate administrator, Federal Emer-



U.S. Department of the Interior Secretary David Bernhardt and Lt. Gov. Arnold Palacios.



U.S. Department of the Interior Secretary David Bernhardt and Guam Gov. Lourdes 'Lou' Leon Guerrero.



U.S. Department of the Interior Secretary David Bernhardt and U.S. Virgin Islands Gov. Albert Bryan Jr.



U.S. Department of the Interior Secretary David Bernhardt and American Samoa Lt. Gov. Lemanu Mauga.

gency Management Agency's Office of Resilience who presented on Disaster Recovery and Resilience in the U.S. territories;

- Brian Cavanaugh, senior director for Resilience Policy, National Security Council; and

- Tina Wei Smith, executive director, White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders who presented on The President's initiative to produce an analysis of economic conditions of the U.S. territories to help develop strategies for diversification.

The IGIA helps to ensure coordination and collaboration among federal agencies in addressing issues of concern to the U.S. territories of Guam, American Samoa, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the CNMI. Established by Executive Order 13537, the group is co-chaired by the Interior secretary and the White House deputy assistant to the President & director of Intergovernmental Affairs.

For more information about the work of the Office of Insular Affairs, visit www.doi.gov/oia or follow @ASIIADomenech on Twitter. (PR)



From left, CNMI Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios, U.S. Virgin Islands Gov. Albert Bryan Jr., Guam Gov. Lourdes "Lou" Leon Guerrero, deputy assistant to the President Doug Hoelscher, Interior Secretary David Bernhardt, American Samoa Lt. Gov. Lemanu Mauga; USVI Delegate Stacey Plaskett, and Interior assistant secretary Doug Domenech.

PHOTOS BY U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR



Senior plenary session of the Interagency Group on Insular Areas at the White House.

Island Snapshots



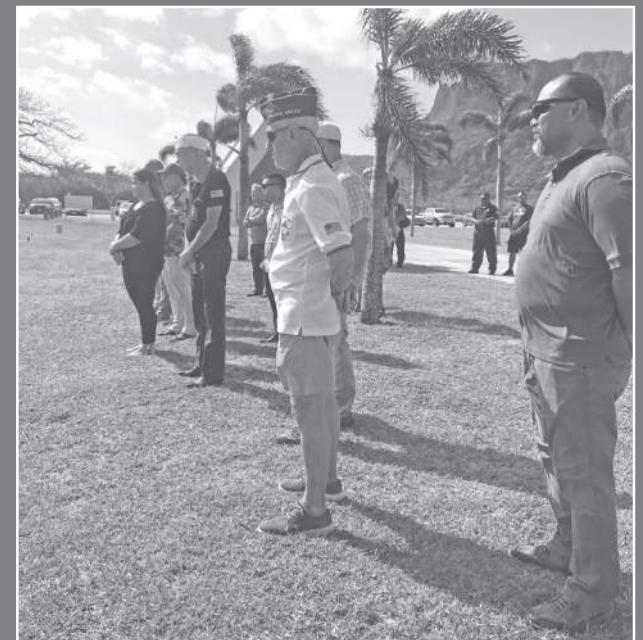
'GIVE KIDS A SMILE'

NEIL FAMA

Representatives and volunteers of the Saipan Seventh-Day Adventist Clinic help treat kids at the SDA Dentistry Clinic as part of the American Dental Association's Give Kids A Smile program annual event last Feb. 7.



NEIL FAMA
About 60 children got free oral health services, including dental exams, extractions, fillings, and fluoride treatment at the Saipan Seventh-Day Adventist Clinic last Feb. 7 as part of the American Dental Association's "Give Kids A Smile" annual event.



FINAL SALUTE

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Veterans and extended guests pay their final respects to the late Robert McCausland at the Veterans Cemetery in Marpi last Feb. 11. McCausland passed away on Sept. 28, 2018, and his body spent the next 18 months at the morgue of the Commonwealth Health Center.



SUMO BY THE BEACH

Hyatt Regency Saipan general manager Nick Ishikawa, left, and sumo wrestler Kiyokushiuho Koki have a souvenir photo taken during a break in the sumo wrestling demonstration at the beach side of Hyatt last Feb. 15.

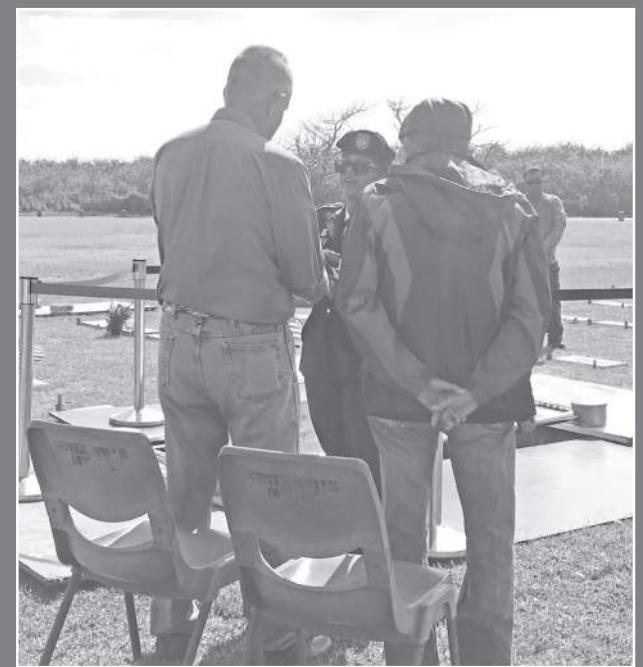
BEA CABRERA



BEA CABRERA
Saipan children have a glimpse of what a sumo wrestler's life is like at the sumo wrestling exhibit held Saturday at the beach side of Hyatt Regency Saipan.



BEA CABRERA
A member of the audience takes the sumo wrestling challenge during the sumo wrestling demonstration at the beach side of Hyatt last Feb. 15.



JUSTINE NAUTA

Dave Blake, a friend of the deceased, receives the American flag that had been draped on the casket of the late Robert McCausland at the conclusion of the burial ceremony at the Veterans Cemetery in Marpi last Feb. 11.



PASEO CLEANUP CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Volunteers of PDM Promoters pick up trash underneath bushes during their cleanup last month at Paseo de Marianas.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

An army of sweepers clean up the Paseo de Marianas grounds during the PDM Promoter's monthly cleanup at Paseo de Marianas last month.



HONOR SOCIETY

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Members of the Saipan International School's National Honor Society and National Junior Honor Society pose together at the Charley's Cabaret of the Pacific Island Club Saipan in San Antonio last Jan. 29 during the swearing-in ceremony for new members.

Opinion

Saipan Tribune

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EDITORIAL

Do active-shooter drills in schools hurt students more than they help?

In 2015-16, more than three-fourths of the public schools around the country conducted drills to teach students how to react to a shooter on campus, according to the National Center for Education Statistics. In the four years since then, many additional horrifying shootings—especially the killing of 17 people at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla., in 2018—have created an even-more-robust business in active-shooter drills at workplaces and schools.

But now, the two major national teachers unions as well as the pro-gun-control group Everytown for Gun Safety are calling on schools to reconsider these drills, saying students are being traumatized by them and there's no evidence they save lives.

Ending all the drills would be going a bit far. Preparation for emergencies—even unlikely ones—isn't a bad thing; in general, we as a society do too little of it. (Everyone with a comprehensive earthquake pack at home, in a safe and accessible spot, please raise your hand.)

And while it's true that there's little conclusive evidence that the drills would make a difference in an actual shooting incident, there's also little evidence that they wouldn't make a difference. Luckily for us all, their effectiveness hasn't been tested in a major way.

At this point, though, the drills seem to do more to make parents and the public feel reassured than to save lives. For all the terrifying recent incidents, students are still extremely safe on campus, far less likely to be killed there than in a car accident or, in many neighborhoods, walking to and from school.

In 2019, eight people were killed in U.S. school shootings, according to Education Week's school-shooting tracker. In just the past several months, more than 70 children in the country have died of the flu—and yet only about half of Americans get flu shots. More than 10 children die each week in car accidents.

Then there are the drills themselves. They range from activities such as gently instructing students while they remain seated to having them run around barricading doors. In some cases, schools have panicked students by not announcing that the drill was, in fact, a drill. In some cases, people "playing" the attacker in a drill have worn masks to make the scenario more realistic. Schools have used fake blood and fired blanks from guns. Things have gotten so out of hand that teachers in Indiana complained in March 2019 that they had been shot with pellet guns during an active-shooter drill, raising welts and in some cases causing bleeding. This is insanity.

There is abundant anecdotal evidence that the heavy focus on these drills in recent years has rattled students and made them feel less safe at school, not more.

As Melissa Reeves, a professor at Winthrop University

See HELP on Next Page



Where are we on the global catastrophe spectrum?

Many a gloomy doomsayer has gone to his grave disappointed because, despite threatening signs to the contrary, the ever-resilient earth persists. The sun still comes up, the seasons change and human beings endure.

Sophisticated civilizations have come and gone, but you would have gone broke betting on catastrophe on a global scale, even during the 14th Century, when many thought the plague, raging through Europe, signaled the end of humanity. They were wrong.

Still, is it just me or do you, too, have the nagging feeling that the potential for global catastrophe has increased in inverse proportion to our shrinking world? Is it possible that, for once, the doomsayers are on to something?

Of course, the coronavirus, surging in China and making inroads elsewhere, is relevant to this way of thinking, but we probably shouldn't overreact. The disease has quickly killed 1,700 people, but experts note that the ordinary flu kills about 400,000 people every year worldwide, and the flu pandemic of 1918 killed more than 20 million. We'll probably be fine. Probably.

At the more ominous end of the catastrophe spectrum is climate change. But for many people it's still an abstraction whose worst effects seem far in the future. Unless you live in Australia, California, Bangladesh, Miami or just about anywhere else where the ocean meets the shore, it's easier just not to think about it.

The possibility of nuclear war falls somewhere on the catastrophe spectrum, as well, but like climate change, it's an abstraction that we find easy to ignore. If we think about it at all, we hope that we were sufficiently chastened by the destruction at Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 and that no nation or faction would unleash these unimaginably powerful weapons on other human beings. This, of course, is a naive mistake.

But consider a more immediate catastrophe-maker: conventional warfare. Since all of these potential catastrophes—climate change, nuclear war, conventional war and even, probably, the coronavirus—are connected in complicated and obscure ways, we should probably be concerned by how close we came to a conventional war in January when tensions with Iran took a sharp spike.

Had, say, 10 American troops been killed—a distinct possibility; at least 100 were injured—by Iran's inevitable retaliation for the assassination of top general Suleimani, we could very well

By JOHN M. CRISP
Tribune News Service

John M. Crisp, an op-ed columnist for Tribune News Service, lives in Georgetown, Texas, and can be reached at jcristcolumns@gmail.com.



be engaged with a catastrophic war in the Middle East right now. And the fact that not everyone believes that such a war would be catastrophic only increases the possibility of conflict.

Unfortunately, wars spring from and reflect the psychology of their times and, at present, the world is in a bad mood. We seem to be getting ready to fight.

On Feb. 5, the day that President Donald Trump was acquitted by the Senate, my local paper carried two related stories:

First, the European Union expressed regret that Trump had cancelled a prohibition against the use of landmines, a move that, according to an EU policy chief, "undermines the global norm against anti-personnel mines. A norm that has saved tens of thousands of people in the past 20 years."

Another article in the same edition announced the U.S. military's deployment of a long-range missile equipped with a low-yield nuclear warhead. Oddly, the Pentagon insists that this nuclear weapon makes nuclear war less likely. Critics contend that nuclear-litde could lead more easily to a full-blown nuclear war.

If it does, we will be ready to fight: The same article reports Trump's continued commitment to modernize our nuclear forces.

In any case, it appears that we're preparing for war. World War I scholars don't agree on what started that global catastrophe. In fact, the war started without much of a reason, at all, except that Europe was home to rival nations that were competitive and well-armed, that were willing to fight and that had not nearly enough imagination about what a catastrophe lay ahead.

But that's the thing about catastrophes: They're always abstract, distant, implausible and even unthinkable. And then, suddenly, they're not.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Silensi I Señgsuñg

Isagun Coronavirus machalapun gi todu i tanu' sin ditension. Kulan matdision na peste. Fuetsau, manma-utut todu karera entalu' nacion kontodu para Marianas ginen bisinu.

Lau guine gi ma'pus na semana doku' otru chenut: Norovirus, kontra estomag. De dios sa' kontra gofes yan estomagu na biahe.

Un' pinadese na oppan gi todu i tanu'. Ti soplus Marianas guine na mattirun peste. Hana chatsagayu' pot gai atburotu este na peste gi halum diskuidu. Puede ti ha fatoigue hit pot makat para todu.

Areglu

Para i manadan representante gi hegsu' I Deni' debi Marianas de u chechela gi todu asuntun linahyan.

Lau tantu de manlosus manmalefa na guaha 15-mit an empleau gumagana suetdun popple. Estague' i dichu asuntu! Haf planun miyu umadelanta pot tautau-ta? Na ti pot asuntun kualidat linala' tautau ni in' representa?

Esta nachaleg 'an tafaisen haf' planun niha. I ineppe: "Kanami". Pine'lon niha na 'an masañgan "kanami" (ekonomia) esta mauleg. Ke lau kau guaha 'nai in' chile' Economics 101 na para in' batbaruye umatrebi gueku na esplikasian?

Atan sa' klaru na mampus megai na empleau gumagana suetdun popple. Haf dumeteten hamyu sumatba este na chinatsaga? Siempre tali' e gi karera mona disposision ginen i tautau.

Chenot

Fuera de Coronavirus (COVID-19), doku' otru (Norovirus) giya Louisiana ni pipinu' lokue'. Dios mihu! Ha tagam todu atmos bandan Pasifiku este dos sagu.

I mefe'na kontra gofes, i segundu, estomagu. Megai giya America entre mana' fañaga gi hospital 'sino mandimalas. Todu i dos sagu i man-amku' mas ha affekta piof i man-malañgu seriosamente.

Gi mismu tiempu trabiha tai amot este na sagu. Tinaka' ta'lu kuattro mesis estake umasoda' e dulognä.

Namanman na chenot pot enteru i globus ha affekta. Kulan

HELP

From Page 10

and former president of the National Association of School Psychologists, put it to National Public Radio, when schools practice fire drills, they don't light fires in the hallways.

What's most important is that schools focus on security measures that are safe and effective—and that testing be done to make sure they really are. Remember the popular D.A.R.E. anti-drug program during the 1980s and '90s that, after the expenditure of many millions of dollars over many years, proved to be ineffective and even counterproductive?

Funding for school security is limited and should be spent in ways that provide the most protection for the dollar. A November 2019 study by the U.S. Secret Service noted that there are many signs before a shooting that a student might be at risk of attacking others at school. The report suggested that the primary focus of schools should be better counseling, major attention to a school's social environment—shooters generally had been ostracized or bullied—and strong coordination between teachers and counselors.

The Los Angeles Unified School District has approached safety drills in a far saner manner, taking things slowly and deliberately. It does not hold active-shooter drills at this point while it looks into what programs might be best for its students. District safety officials said they are not planning active drills where students run around panicked, barricading doors. Their focus would be more on safety lessons without the high drama, in all kinds of potentially dangerous situations, including but not limited to shootings, helping students stay aware of where they are and what exits or hiding spaces are available.

Schools throughout the nation should be similarly thoughtful. Learning to be prepared in an uncertain world can be traumatizing—people who were students in the 1960s probably still remember the useless ducking under their desks in the event of a nuclear bomb—or it can be empowering. Schools shouldn't overemphasize remote and unlikely dangers, but that doesn't mean students can't benefit from basic safety lessons. Without the masked attackers or pellet guns, please.

(c)2020 Los Angeles Times

mohon matdision biblia. Lau ginen China tutuhun i Coronavirus. Ripot mediku ilegña na i chenot ginen to'la yan mukus tautau.

Mauleg sa' ti machage chenot lalahan Chamorro dinalag ni esta kulan mañachaleg i nina'ye pot chumichichi' ni putiña. Dios mihu!

Pasu

'Nai hali' e laihu bisñietu litratuhu gi gasetu ha chule' ya ilegña na un' dia para u gaige gi mismu pahina. Ha chule' para i eskuela ya sige ha fattan ñaihon.

Hu esplika na tinaka' tiempu estake para u fañge' gi gasetu. Debi finenina uma-eduka yan fañge' la apmam na tiempu estake establisau na'aña gi komunida. Debi u gana inañgoghun komunida kumu periodista (journalist-writer).

'An ha petsige guinefiña i laihu siempre ha comprende haf na obligasion mau'udai gi offisiun mañgge'. Dañkulu na responsabilidad este na offisiu. Ti magpu' gi mapecan litratu gi gasetu. Debi un' gana yan mirese ayu na kampu.

Este na modun tinige' debi un' atan yan esplika todu atmos banda gi asuntu pot para u klaru i attikulu. Sede i mananaita umebalua i asuntu. Lau un' koyentura 'nai siña mas guaha kinemprende gi asunto-ta siha.

Lokue', todou i tiempu mas mauleg hinasson dos tautau ke unu. Ha sede klaru na kinemprende 'nai mas libianu ma-aksepta i asuntu gi lamasa.

Gi hilu' dineskuten asuntu sumasaunau inekuñgug gi haf mansañgan. Ayu 'nai un' li'e na gai minauleg kontribusion i otru. Gi hilu' inakonfotma mas libianu mapetsige asuntu siha. Ti siña na i hinassomu pafa umatiatiye sin kuestion.

Inapagat:

Komprendiyun finu' mañaina-ta pot petsonat na opñion. Lau ni unabes 'nai konfotme-yu'. Homlu' i inana'en hinasson todou gi asunto-ta siha. Dispues nina'en ginen hilu' haf' gaige giya guahu.

Lokue', todou i tiempu mas mauleg hinasson dos tautau ke unu. Ha sede klaru na kinemprende 'nai mas libianu ma-aksepta i asuntu gi lamasa.

Gi hilu' dineskuten asuntu sumasaunau inekuñgug gi haf mansañgan. Ayu 'nai un' li'e na gai minauleg kontribusion i otru. Gi hilu' inakonfotma mas libianu mapetsige asuntu siha. Ti siña na i hinassomu pafa umatiatiye sin kuestion.

Inakomprende

Gi dinaña' asuntu linahyan debi tafan listu amtau na dineskuten asuntota siha gi hilu' inakomprende. Gi hilu' inakonfotma 'nai

An arms race that no one can win

Welcome to the 21st century nuclear arms race. Once again, we're teetering on the brink of nuclear conflict instead of taking critical steps toward de-escalation and disarmament.

If it feels like we're in the middle of a wacky James Bond movie plot, that's not far off. Any progress we were making toward nuclear safety is being rapidly, systematically and recklessly dismantled by the Trump administration.

Current tensions with Iran, particularly after the assassination of top Iranian military commander Qassem Soleimani, have heightened not just the risk of regional conflict but also of global nuclear war.

In his State of the Union address on Feb. 4, President Donald Trump declared that Iran "must abandon its pursuit of nuclear weapons," without acknowledging that he unilaterally withdrew the United States from an international treaty, which was successfully doing just that. It's vital that the United States get back to the negotiating table and reenter the Iran deal.

Trump also pulled out of the landmark Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty between the United States and Russia. This treaty led to the elimination of nearly 2,700 intermediate-range missiles and helped the two countries make tangible progress in stabilization and disarmament efforts.

Currently, the most important arms control treaty the United States is still a party to is the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, also known as New START. The treaty is set to expire just a year from now, in February 2021.

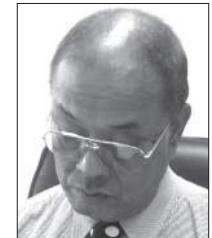
In December, Russian President Vladimir Putin offered to immediately extend the New START treaty, without preconditions. But New START's future remains unclear. Trump has hinted in the past that he may let the treaty simply expire, while senior U.S. officials have said that Washington wants a broader deal involving China.

Former United States Secretary of State Dr. Madeleine Albright and former Russian foreign minister Igor Ivanov co-authored a Feb. 10 op-ed in the New York Times urging the United States to work to extend New START.

"Doing nothing while waiting for a 'better' agreement is a rec-

By JOHN S. DELROSARIO JR.

Special to the Saipan Tribune



John DelRosario Jr. is a former publisher of the Saipan Tribune and a former secretary of the Department of Public Lands. All views expressed by the author are his/her own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion and stance of the Saipan Tribune.

mafañagu haf para u fan mapetsige. Mas libianu i che'chu' linahyan gi hilu' inakomprende.

Hu agradese inapagat saina pot esta manginen mismu lugat ya makomprende haf' debi umachogue dimas de un' dimas.

Usun ramienta tat kumu machete mauleg un' eyag propiu usuña pot no unna' tailayen maisa hau 'sino haye na prohimu. Piot usun kuha mauleg un' adahe usuña tatnai sisida para u taigue damagas adeñgmu.

Chenot

Mattirun Coronavirus yan Norovirus, unu gofes i otru estomagu, puede mansoplus hit pot makat na chenot gi maseha haye na tautau.

Trabiha i mediku ti masodada'e amotña ni unu gi dos chenot. Kase esta ennau kuattru mesis yan pa'gu 'nai siña u guaha fina' dulug para este na peste. Namagof sa' manlibre hit ginen este siha na peste.

Infotmasion pot tumunug fondun iya Marianas kulan estotu ya puede guaha sattun na inadahe pot no unna' fan galileg hit taya' salape gi kaha. Mauleg i listu na planun ma-utut gastu ni ma-anunisia guine na semana. Puede nahuñg para hinemu' yan edukasian.

Nasion siha giya Asia mampus man-chathinassu pot chadeg machalapun sagun Coronavirus ya ti nahuñg fasilitat hinemu' para i manadan mammalangu. Poresu na todu bumiae ginen iya China mana' para desde ma'pus na semana.

By OLIVIA ALPERSTEIN

Tribune News Service



Olivia Alperstein is the media relations manager for Physicians for Social Responsibility, www.psr.org. This column was produced for the Progressive Media Project, which is run by The Progressive magazine, and distributed by Tribune News Service.

ipe for disaster: We could lose New START and fail to replace it," they wrote. "The treaty's agreed limits on nuclear arsenals are too important to be put at risk in a game of nuclear chicken."

The stakes in preserving or reentering these vital arms control treaties could not be higher.

Besides ditching vital arms control treaties, the Trump administration is actively revving up the arms race. On Feb. 5, the U.S. Defense Department confirmed that the Navy has deployed a low-yield, submarine-launched ballistic missile warhead.

To call these weapons "low-yield" is misleading. At 6.5 kilotons, they are 2,600 times more powerful than the 1995 Oklahoma City bomb. And they may be indistinguishable on radar from missiles armed with high-yield bombs, meaning an adversary could respond to a launch with a full attack, immediately escalating the conflict to a full nuclear war.

Proponents of this low-yield nuclear warhead say it is more "usable," a turn of phrase that should concern everyone. A more "usable" warhead increases the risk of actual nuclear conflict, while decreasing U.S. national security.

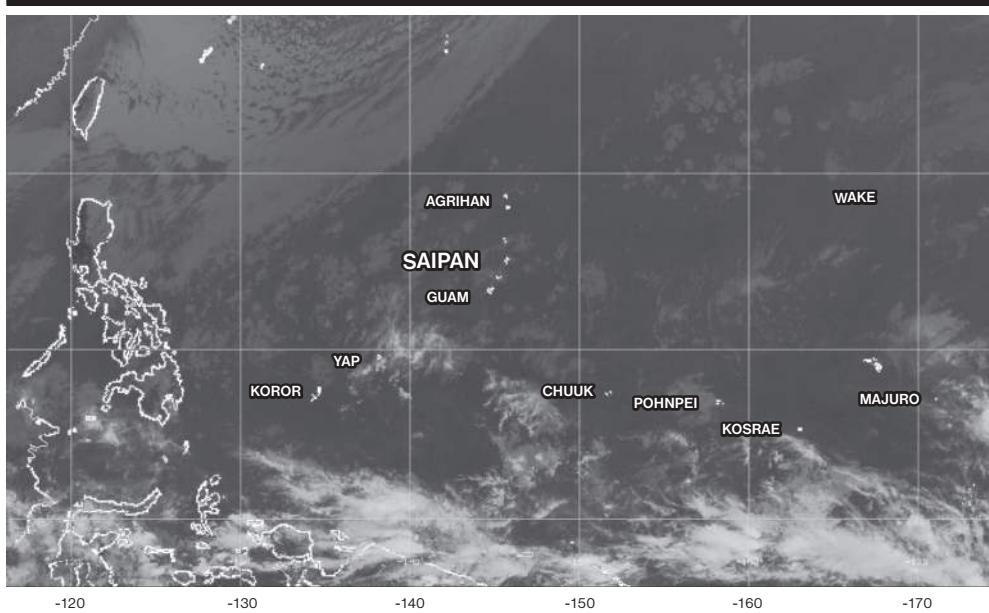
We all have a vital interest in ensuring that nuclear weapons are not used. It's time for the United States to take the lead on nonproliferation and disarmament. The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists' Doomsday Clock, which rates the danger of unparalleled catastrophe, is now set at 100 seconds to midnight, closer than ever to an apocalyptic disaster. And in the real world, we can't rely on a vodka martini-sipping British spy to save us.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Mostly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 15 to 25 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated light showers. Breezy Thursday. Northeast winds 15 to 25 mph.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.
87°	74°	87°	75°	87°
75°	86°	74°	85°	74°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 8:33 AM, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2020

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

The soon arriving cold front is our main forecast problem this package. The biggest factors should be wind and waves, which will likely require a new small craft advisory. By the time cold fronts get down to our latitude, they have lost most of their cold air punch so the temperature forecasts are no big deal. Similarly, moisture is limited with this system, so rainfall amounts will not be anything difficult to handle. After the front, we will drift back into a dry season trade-wind regime.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA		▲	▼	°F
Guam and Rota	Windy	83°	/	76°
Palau	Partly Cloudy	84°	/	77°
Yap	Showers	85°	/	80°
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	85°	/	80°
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	85°	/	79°
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	85°	/	79°
Majuro	Partly Cloudy	85°	/	81°

AROUND THE GLOBE		▲	▼	°F
Auckland	Mostly Sunny	79°	/	64°
Beijing	Cloudy	45°	/	28°
Hong Kong	Mostly Sunny	72°	/	63°
Honolulu	Windy	80°	/	70°
London	Windy	52°	/	41°
Los Angeles	Mostly Sunny	71°	/	52°
Manila	Showers	84°	/	73°
Melbourne	Mostly Cloudy	63°	/	54°
Miami	Mostly Sunny	81°	/	71°
New York	Partly Cloudy	46°	/	28°
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	55°	/	39°
Paris	Mostly Cloudy	50°	/	45°
Busan	Partly Cloudy	55°	/	43°
Rome	Showers	57°	/	43°
Salem	Showers	61°	/	45°
San Francisco	Mostly Sunny	58°	/	44°
Seoul	Sunny	52°	/	28°
Tokyo	Mostly Cloudy	57°	/	41°
Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	50°	/	30°



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- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.net

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF FEBRUARY 6, 2020

DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA117 9:15am 9:55am Daily				UA174 7:30am 8:11am Daily			
UA156 6:20pm 7:00pm 2, 4, 6				UA112 4:45pm 5:26pm 2, 4, 6			
SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)				NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN			
SKY816 4:35pm 7:30pm 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7				SKY811 10:15am 3:00pm Daily			
SKY816 5:05pm 8:00pm 6							
SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)				BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN			
7C3451 3:20am 6:30am Daily				7C3452 9:35pm 2:30am+1 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7			
7C3452 10:05pm 2:30am+1 3							
SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)				SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN			
TW308 2:05am 6:05am Daily				OZ6233 7:30am 12:50pm 2, 4, 6			
OZ626 2:10am 6:05am 1				OZ623 8:10am 1:40pm 1, 3, 5, 7			
OZ626 2:50am 6:40am 2, 3, 5, 6, 7				7C3402 10:10am 3:30pm Daily			
OZ626 3:35am 7:20am 4				TW309 11:10am 4:40pm Daily			
7C3403 4:35am 8:35am Daily				OZ625 7:30pm 1:00am+1 7			
OZ6243 3:10pm 7:00pm 2, 4, 6				TW307 7:45pm 1:05am+1 Daily			
OZ624 3:30pm 7:20pm 1, 3, 5, 7				OZ625 8:20pm 1:40am+1 1, 2, 4, 5, 6			
7C3401 4:30pm 8:25pm Daily				OZ625 9:05pm 2:25am+1 3			
TW310 5:40pm 10:15pm Daily				7C3404 10:10pm 3:40am+1 Daily			
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
OZ626/701 2:10am 10:35am 1 via ICN				UA189/174 12:40am 8:11am+1 3, 6 via GUM			
OZ626/701 2:50am 10:35am 2, 3, 5, 6, 7 via ICN				OZ702/625 12:05pm 1:00am+1 7 via ICN			
UA117/183 9:15am 9:50pm Daily via GUM				OZ702/625 12:05pm 1:40am+1 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 via ICN			
UA117/193 9:15am 11:50pm 2, 5 via GUM-ROR				OZ702/625 12:05pm 2:25am+1 3 via ICN			
UA156/183 6:20pm 9:50pm Daily via GUM				UA192/174 10:40pm 8:11am+1 2, 5 via GUM-ROR			
UA156/193 6:20pm 11:50pm 2 via GUM-ROR				UA184/174 10:55pm 8:11am+1 1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM			
OZ704/6233 11:45pm 12:50pm+1 2, 4, 6 via ICN				OZ704/623 11:45pm 1:40pm+1 1, 3, 5, 7 via ICN			
OZ704/623 11:45pm 1:40pm+1 1, 3, 5, 7 via ICN				OZ704/6233 11:45pm 12:50pm+1 2, 4, 6 via ICN			
OZ704/6233 11:45pm 1:40pm+1 1, 3 via ICN				OZ704/623 11:45pm 1:40pm+1 1, 3 via ICN			
SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)							

Business

UK to EU: We won't accept supervision in post-Brexit deal

BRUSSELS (AP)—Britain's chief negotiator on Monday set out a clashing course in trade talks with the European Union, saying the 27-nation bloc has totally missed the point of Brexit if it thinks it will retain some supervision over U.K. actions.

The EU has said it wants the best possible trade relationship with the U.K. but only if there is a level playing field for businesses on anything from state subsidies to environmental standards, and is insisting on clear checks to enforce it.

U.K. negotiator David Frost said, according to extracts from the released speech, that "to think that we might accept EU supervision on so-called level playing field issues simply fails to see the point of what we are doing." In a major speech at the ULB Brussels university, he said that rejecting any EU meddling on rules and regulations "is the point of the whole project" of leaving the bloc after 47 years.

And he further stressed that there was no way that Britain would seek a longer transition period than 11 months to clinch a deal, a timespan considered next to impossible for a trade agreement between such commercial juggernauts.

On Jan. 1, 2021, he said, "we recover our political and



AP

In this Wednesday, Oct. 9, 2019 file photo, a construction worker stands in front of a door with the EU stars at EU headquarters in Brussels.

lations and the demand to adhere to EU rules. Frost made it clear that setting its own rules clearly trumps a cozy deal with the EU.

"It is central to our vision that we must have the ability to set laws that suit us — to claim the right that every other non-EU country in the world has," Frost said.

The EU has insisted that it has no problems with that, but that the further removed those laws and rules are, the less advantageous the trade deal. EU chief negotiator Michel Barnier was equally emphatic that the EU's 27 remaining nations wouldn't agree to any British trade deal just to avoid a costly, chaotic "no-deal" at the start of 2021.

The negotiations are to start at the beginning of next month.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Jeff Bezos commits \$10B to fight climate change

NEW YORK (AP)—Amazon founder Jeff Bezos said Monday that he plans to spend \$10 billion of his own fortune to help fight climate change. Bezos, the world's richest person, said in an Instagram post that he'll start giving grants this summer to scientists, activists and nonprofits working to protect Earth. "I want to work alongside others both to amplify known ways and to explore new ways of fighting the devastating impact of climate change," Bezos said in the post. Amazon, the company Bezos runs, has an enormous carbon footprint. Last year, Amazon officials said the company would work to have 100% of its energy use come from solar panels and other renewable energy by 2030. The online retailer relies on fossil fuels to power planes, trucks and vans in order to ship billions of items all around the world. Amazon workers in its Seattle headquarters have been vocal in criticizing some of the company's practices, pushing it to do more to combat climate change. Bezos said in the post Monday that he will call his new initiative the Bezos Earth Fund. An Amazon spokesman confirmed that Bezos will be using his own money for the fund. Despite being among the richest people in the world, Bezos only recently became active in donating money to causes as other billionaires like Bill Gates and Warren Buffett have done. In 2018, Bezos started another fund, committing \$2 billion of his own money to open preschools in low-income neighborhoods and give money to nonprofits that help homeless families.

Bezos, who founded Amazon 25 years ago, has a stake in the company that is worth more than \$100 billion.

Apple warns China virus will cut iPhone production, sales

CUPERTINO, Calif. (AP)—Apple Inc. is warning investors that it won't meet its second-quarter financial guidance because the viral outbreak in China has cut production of iPhones. The Cupertino, California-based company said Monday that all of its iPhone manufacturing facilities are outside Hubei province, the epicenter of the outbreak, and all have been reopened. But the company said production is ramping up slowly. "The health and well-being of every person who helps make these products possible is our paramount priority, and we are working in close consultation with our suppliers and public health experts as this ramp continues," Apple said in a statement. The death toll from COVID-19, a disease caused by the new coronavirus, was 1,770 as of Monday. Apple says demand for iPhones is also down in China because many of Apple's 42 retail stores there are closed or operating with reduced hours. China is Apple's third largest retail market for iPhones, after the U.S. and Europe. Outside China, Apple said iPhone demand has been strong and is in line with the company's expectations. On Jan. 28, Apple said it expected second quarter revenue between \$63 billion and \$67 billion. Apple's second quarter ends March 30. Apple says the situation is evolving and it will provide more information on its next earnings call in April.

US House speaker Pelosi warns allies against using Huawei

BRUSSELS (AP)—No NATO ally should succumb to the temptation of letting Chinese tech giant Huawei into their next-generation cellular networks, U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said Monday at Allied headquarters, turning U.S. opposition to Huawei into a bipartisan effort.

Pelosi said the invasion of privacy that would result from having Huawei integrated into Europe's 5G communication networks would be "like having the state police, the Chinese state police, right in your pocket."

She insisted such technology was far too sensitive to turn to over to Chinese interests, even though they can deliver such technology cheaper, thanks to the fact that the company relied on Western know-

how to build its systems.

"While some people say that it's cheaper to do Huawei — well yeah — it's a People's Liberation Army initiative using reverse engineering from Western technology," Pelosi, the senior Democratic lawmaker, told reporters in Brussels. "So, of course it's going to be cheaper to put on the market. And if it's cheaper, then they get the market share and then they (China) bring in their autocracy of lack of privacy."

U.S. President Donald Trump's administration has also raised national security concerns about Huawei, the world's largest telecommunications equipment manufacturer, and is aggressively lobbying Western allies to bar the company from their wireless,

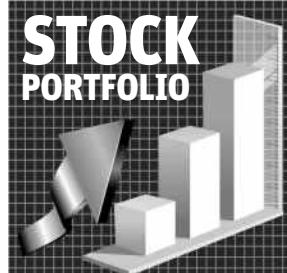
high-speed networks.

Trump administration officials, including Cabinet secretaries, say Huawei can give the Chinese government backdoor access to data, allegations that the company rejects.

The U.S. has been trying to have European nations ban the gear from next-generation cellular networks, but countries are shying away from banning it altogether. Britain, notably, announced last month that it would allow Huawei to participate in certain non-sensitive areas of its networks.

Pelosi warned allies not to cave in to Chinese pressure to take Huawei.

"You cannot sell the privacy of the people of your country down the river," Pelosi said.



LEADING INDICATORS

S&P
3,380.16
+6.22
+0.18% 

DOW
29,398.08
-25.22
-0.09% 

NASDAQ
9,731.18
+19.21
+0.20% 

In U.S. dollar terms

EXCHANGE RATES

Australian Dollar	1.49
British Pound	0.77
Canadian Dollar	1.32
Chinese Yuan	6.87
Euro	0.92

Hong Kong Dollar

7.77

Russian Ruble

63.15

Indian Rupee

70.71

Singapore Dollar

1.39

Japanese Yen

109.73

South Korean Won

1,166.16

Malaysian Ringgit

4.11

Swiss Franc

0.98

New Zealand Dollar

1.56

Taiwan Dollar

29.57

Philippine Peso

49.60

Thailand Baht

31.19

Nation

American cruise passengers quarantined at US military bases

TRAVIS AIR FORCE BASE, Calif. (AP)—More than 300 American cruise ship passengers, including 14 who tested positive for coronavirus, were being quarantined at military bases in California and Texas on Monday after arriving from Japan on charter flights overnight.

One plane carrying cruise passengers touched down at Travis Air Force Base in Northern California just before midnight Sunday, while another arrived at Lackland Air Force Base in Texas early Monday. The passengers will remain at the bases for two weeks.

Japan's Defense Minister Taro Kono tweeted earlier that Japanese troops helped transport 340 U.S. passengers on 14 buses from Yokohama port to Tokyo's Haneda airport. About 380 Americans were on the cruise ship.

The U.S. said it arranged for the evacuation because people on the Diamond Princess were at a high risk of exposure to the new virus that's been spreading in Asia. For the departing Americans, the evacuation cuts short a 14-day quarantine that began aboard the cruise ship Feb. 5.

The State Department announced later that 14 of the evacuees received confirmation



ship to fly back to the U.S. Cheryl Molesky said the rising number of patients on the ship factored into the decision.

"We are glad to be going home," Cheryl Molesky earlier told NHK TV in Japan. "It's just a little bit disappointing that we'll have to go through quarantine again, and we will probably not be as comfortable as the Diamond Princess, possibly."

She sent The Associated Press a video of her and her husband boarding the plane with other Americans.

"Well, we're exhausted, but we're on the plane and that's a good feeling. Pretty miserable wearing these masks though, and everybody had to go to the bathroom on the bus," she said.

Some American passengers said they would pass up the opportunity to fly to the United States because of the additional quarantine. There also was worry about being on a long flight with other passengers who may be infected or in an incubation period.

One of the Americans, Matthew Smith, said in a tweet Sunday that he saw a passenger with no face mask talking at close quarters with another passenger. He said he and his wife scurried away.

"If there are secondary infections on board, this is why," he said. "And you wanted me to get on a bus with her?"

He said the American health officials who visited their room was apparently surprised that the couple had decided to stay, and wished them luck.

"Thanks, but we're fine," Smith said he told them.

Hundreds still flooded from homes in Mississippi capital

JACKSON, Miss. (AP)—The swollen Pearl River appeared to have crested Monday in Mississippi's capital, but authorities warned the hundreds of evacuees in the Jackson area not to rush back home until they got the all clear, and a forecast of more rain put counties further south at risk of flooding.

No injuries were reported from the major flooding in central Mississippi and southern Tennessee. But as the high water recedes, officials expect to find damaged roads and problems with water and sewage pipes. In Savannah, Tennessee, two houses slid down a muddy bluff into the Tennessee River, although its residents had fled earlier.

"Please do not move back into your neighborhood or into your home until authorities and officials give you the OK to do so," Mississippi Gov. Tate Reeves said at a news conference.

A near-record rainy winter has forced authorities to release water from swollen reservoirs, potentially worsening the flooding for those living downstream.

"It is a chess match we're playing with Mother Nature," said Jim Hopson, spokesman for the Tennessee Valley Authority.

The Pearl River appeared to crest at just under 37 feet (11.3 meters), Reeves said. It is forecast to fall below major flood stage at 36 feet (11 meters) around midnight Tuesday, although more problems could arise if rains in the next few days are heavier than forecast.

"We as a state are not in the clear yet," Reeves said.

The Pearl's highest recorded crest was 43.2 feet on April 17, 1979. The second-highest level occurred May 5, 1983, when the river rose to 39.58 feet.

Reeves thanked residents for heeding evacuation orders. Only 16 search-and-rescue missions were needed, he said, even though as many as 1,000 homes were flooded.

One of those homes belongs to Chris Sharp, who had enough time to find an 18-wheeler, load it with his possessions and drive away Friday from the house his parents bought in the 1970s. The

house was inundated in those previous two flood years.

On Monday, he tried to go back with a boat, but a police officer turned him away.

"All you can do is just sit back and watch," Sharp said by phone from his brother's nearby house.

He expects several inches of water in his home, and this flood finally has Sharp considering whether his family should move. The home isn't covered by flood insurance because he said the cost has grown too expensive in recent years.

"I've been through it before, so I kind of knew what to do," Sharp said, giving a resigned laugh. "But there's a bunch of people who didn't do anything."

Elsewhere in Jackson, residents paddled canoes, kayaks and small fishing boats to check on their houses, giving lifts to other neighbors. Some were able to enter their homes, while others peeked into the windows to check on damage inside. Floodwaters lapped at mailboxes, street signs and cars that had been left in driveways.

Health, said Sunday that an infected person who shows minimal symptoms could still pass the virus to someone else.

It's unclear which base the 14 who tested positive for the virus went to.

Officials said the evacuees who arrived at Travis Air Force Base will be housed at a different location from the more than 200 other Ameri-

cans who were already being quarantined on the base, in a hotel. Those people have been at the base since early February, when they arrived on flights from China.

No Travis airmen will have contact with the passengers, officials said.

Now that they're in the U.S., the cruise ship passengers must go through another 14 days of quarantine at the military facilities — meaning they will have been under quarantine for a total of nearly four weeks.

Australia, Canada, Hong Kong and Italy were planning similar flights of passengers. Other governments, including

Canada and Hong Kong, also will require the passengers to undergo a second 14-day quarantine.

Japan on Monday announced another 99 infections on the Diamond Princess, raising the ship's total number of cases to 454. Overall, Japan has 419 confirmed cases of the virus, including one death. The United States has confirmed 15 cases within the country. Separately, one U.S. citizen died in China.

Americans Cheryl and Paul Molesky, a couple from Syracuse, New York, opted to trade one coronavirus quarantine for another, leaving the cruise

Daughter of man accused of killing 8 describes his abuse

MAGNOLIA, Miss. (AP)—The daughter of a Mississippi man on trial in the shooting deaths of eight people testified Monday that he was abusive and beat her frequently.

My'Khyiah Godbolt took the stand at a courthouse in Magnolia, the Daily Leader newspaper reported, to testify against her father, Willie Cory Godbolt.

Gebolt, 37, is charged with capital murder, accused of fatally shooting eight people, including the deputy who arrived at his in-laws' home over the Memorial Day in 2017.

Gebolt's 12-year-old daughter told jurors that he "was very mean" and beat both her and her mother often.

The girl, nicknamed Bubble, didn't look at her father during her testimony but he kept his gaze on her.

Gebolt appeared agitated, shaking his head and pursing his lips together tightly when

she described an attack on her with a plastic bat once when they were practicing baseball outside.

She testified that he became angry when she asked to take a break and beat her repeatedly with the bat. She called to relatives for help, and he responded by threatening her.

"If you ever embarrass me like that again, it's going to be worse," she quoted her father as saying.

Jurors also heard testimony from Tamayra May, the adult daughter of victim Tocarra May, who hid with her 11-year-old sister in her mother's car when the shooting began. The jury listened to her 911 call, begging the dispatcher to send help, the Daily Leader reported.

Sheena May took the stand Sunday afternoon, announcing her divorce from Gebolt was final last week.

She said she suffered his

abuse for years, leaving when he beat her but coming back because he swore he'd change.

"He said, 'I love you and I won't do it no more,'" she said.

On the day of the shootings, she had been living at her mother's home for two months.

"I chose my life over my marriage" she said.

Gebolt has pleaded not guilty to four counts of capital murder, four counts of murder, one count of attempted murder, two counts of kidnapping and one count of armed robbery. He has remained in custody since his arrest on May 28, 2017, hours after the shootings.

The killings began after Gebolt entered the in-laws' home in Bogue Chitto and got into an argument with his estranged wife and her family over the couple's two children, a witness testified earlier at trial, according to The Daily Leader.

Asia

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia (AP)—The feel-good story of how Cambodia allowed a cruise ship to dock after it was turned away elsewhere in Asia for fear of spreading a new disease took an unfortunate turn after a passenger later tested positive for the virus.

News over the weekend that an 83-year-old American woman who was on the ship and flew from Cambodia to Malaysia was found to be carrying the virus froze further movement of the passengers and crew of the Westerdam. Some are in hotels in Cambodia's capital, Phnom Penh, while others are still aboard the ship.

The American woman was among several hundred passengers who were flown out of Cambodia on Friday and Saturday. According to authorities in Malaysia, 143 continued their flights home from that country, while the woman and her 84-year-old husband, who was diagnosed with pneumonia, remained behind for treatment.

The dispersal around the world of passengers from the ship with possible exposure to the new coronavirus has sparked concern.

"I think now given that there is a confirmed case that is suspected to have acquired infection on board the ship, the other passengers should be asked to quarantine themselves at home and alert health authorities if they develop fever or respiratory symptoms within the 14 days since disembarkation," said Professor Benjamin Cowling from the School of Public Health at Hong Kong University.

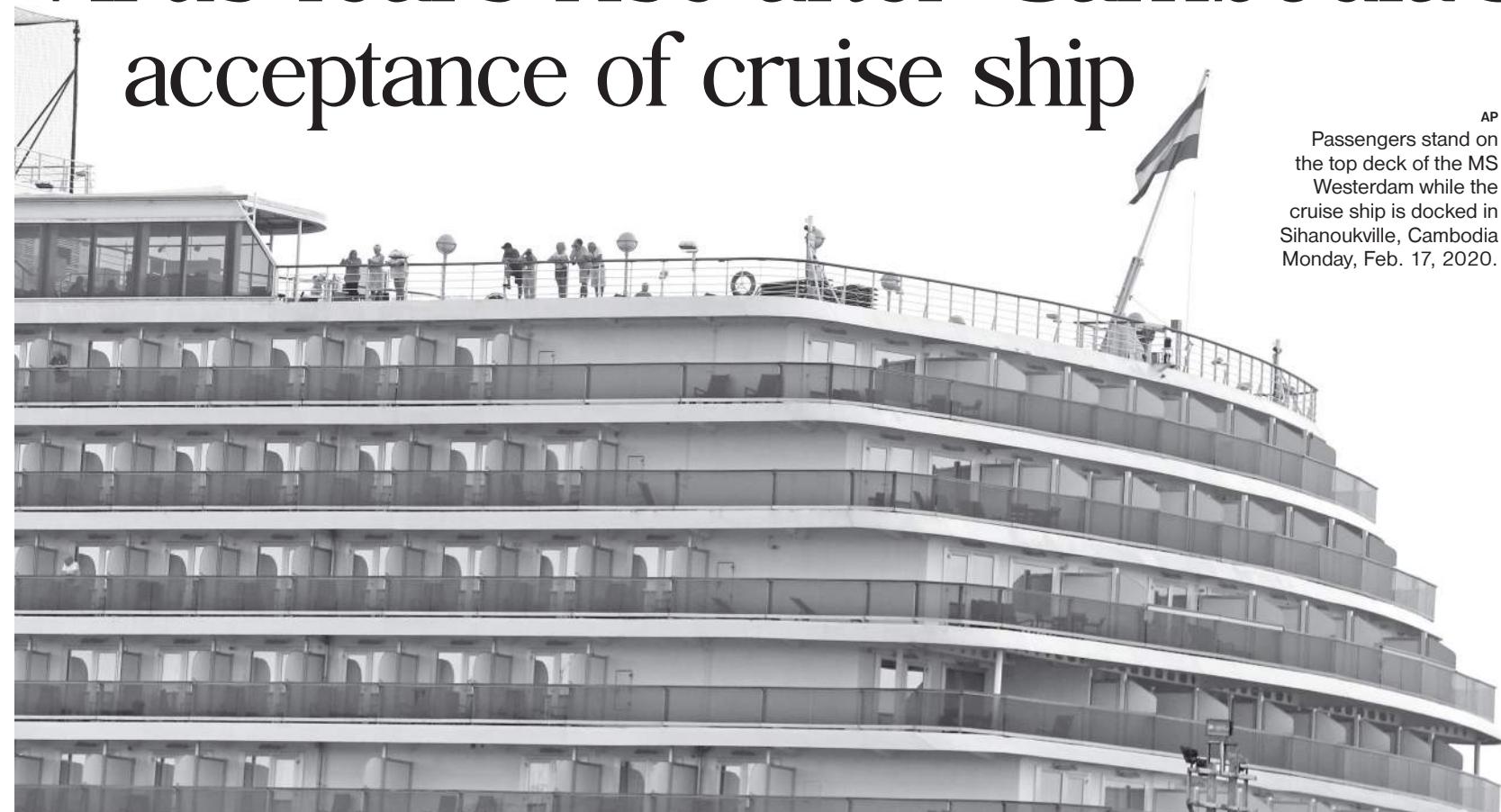
Dr. Gagandeep Kang, executive director of India's Translational Health Science and Technology Institute, said it is unclear whether the woman's infection would result in an outbreak in another part of the world. The virus that causes the disease named COVID-19 has been confirmed in about two dozen countries, with most cases concentrated in China, where it emerged in December.

"We will have to wait and see," she said, adding that it would depend on where the woman got the infection, and at what stage of the infection she was in while in contact with other people.

The ship's operator, Holland America Line, said in a statement Monday that Cambodian health officials were on the ship testing the 255 guests and 747 crew who were awaiting clearance, and that guests currently staying at a Phnom Penh hotel had all been tested.

"At this time, no other guests or crew on board or at the hotel have reported

Virus fears rise after Cambodia's acceptance of cruise ship



AP
Passengers stand on the top deck of the MS Westerdam while the cruise ship is docked in Sihanoukville, Cambodia Monday, Feb. 17, 2020.

any symptoms of the illness. Guests who have already returned home will be contacted by their local health department and provided further information," it said.

The statement added that the virus patient had not reported any illness to the Westerdam's medical center during the cruise. Twenty people who reported illness while on board have tested negative for the virus, it said.

The rest of the passengers and crew had health checks that included filling out a written health questionnaire and having their temperatures checked, which has become standard procedure for air and sea passengers considered at risk.

Several Westerdam passengers from the United States and elsewhere have already returned home and spoken to the media.

Two of the passengers, Jo-

Cruise ship cases almost double

Japan's health ministry said an additional 65 coronavirus cases were found aboard a cruise ship quarantined in Yokohama, raising the total to 135.



seph Schaeffer and his wife, Paulette, a retired nurse, told the Las Vegas Review-Journal from their home in Henderson, Nevada, that they felt the hue and cry over the released passengers was not totally merited.

"It doesn't seem to me that the whole world should be jumping at this," Joseph Schaeffer said.

"There are more deaths from the flu than there have been from this particular vi-

rus," his wife said.

The couple said they were screened on their way home at airports in Phnom Penh and Singapore by thermal scanners that remotely monitor arriving passengers.

On arrival in Los Angeles, they said, they were among a large crowd getting screened that included fellow cruise passengers. They said they answered questions from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that included whether they felt sick, had visited mainland China or knew anyone who had contracted the virus.

Two Canadians who returned via Vancouver International Airport were asked to put on protective face masks on arrival but were not otherwise isolated, Canada's CBC News reported.

"We were asked a few questions and filled out an immigration form, and they very

nicely helped us bypass the usual lineups and let us out the door," said Joseph Hansen, who took the cruise with his wife. "We're feeling fine."

Hansen, from Surrey, British Columbia, told CBC that he did not hear about the American woman in Malaysia with the virus until he landed in Vancouver on Sunday.

"I guess on the one hand it's upsetting to know that there was one case, but we're feeling fine," he said. "We've had health scans, temperature scans and we don't have any concerns for our own health."

Cambodia's government had originally earned kudos from the head of the U.N.'s World Health Organization and the U.S. ambassador there for allowing the ship to dock at Sihanoukville after it was turned away by Japan, Taiwan, the Philippines, Guam and Thailand.

China reports 1,886 new virus cases, death toll up by 98

BEIJING (AP)—China reported 1,886 new virus cases and 98 more deaths in its update Tuesday on a disease outbreak that has caused mild illness in most people, an assessment that promoted guarded optimism from global health authorities.

The update raised the number of deaths in mainland China to 1,868 and the total confirmed cases to 72,436.

On Monday, the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention published a study of earlier cases of the disease, finding that more than 80% of

people infected had mild illness and the number of new infections seems to be falling since early this month.

Monday's report gives the World Health Organization a clearer picture of where the outbreak is headed, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said at a news conference.

But he added it was too early to know if the reported decline would continue. "Every scenario is still on the table," he said.

The seeming drop in the number of cases follows a large spike last week after

hard-hit Hubei province began counting cases by doctors' diagnoses without waiting for laboratory test results. Health authorities there said the change was meant to get patients treated faster.

The disease named COVID-19 emerged in December in Wuhan, Hubei's capital, and the surrounding region has been put

under lockdown to try to contain the outbreak. Transportation has been halted, thousands of hospital beds have been added, and military doctors and nurses have been deployed to staff facilities in the overwhelmed local

health-care system.

State broadcaster CCTV reported that the director of Wuhan's Wuchang Hospital, Liu Zhiming, had died of COVID-19 on Tuesday morning, citing a Beijing medical team sent to help out. No official notice was given and other details were not immediately available.

Earlier, public outrage was stirred by the death from the virus of Wuhan doctor Li Wenliang, who had been threatened by police after releasing word of an outbreak of unusual respiratory illness in January before the city was

placed under quarantine.

China may postpone its upcoming annual congress, the country's biggest political meeting of the year. The standing committee for the National People's Congress will meet Feb. 24 to deliberate postponing the event, which is scheduled to start March 5.

China's biannual auto show, one of the industry's biggest international events, has been postponed, and many sports and entertainment events have been delayed or canceled to avoid travel that may spread the virus.

World



Undated image released Monday Feb. 17, 2020, by Irish Coast Guard showing an abandoned cargo ship the MV Alta, that has washed up on the coast of County Cork, near Ballycotton, southern Ireland. AP

UK grapples with severe floods, storm death toll rises to 3

LONDON (AP)—Britain issued severe flood warnings Monday, advising of life-threatening danger after Storm Dennis dumped weeks' worth of rain in some places. A woman was found dead after being swept away by the floodwaters, the storm's third confirmed victim.

To the east, Dennis' gale-force winds also left nine people injured in Germany as their vehicles crashed into broken trees littering roads and train tracks. Flooding and power outages were reported elsewhere in northern Europe.

By Monday evening, Britain's Environment Agency issued seven severe flood warnings in the central English counties of Herefordshire, Staffordshire and Worcestershire. Another 200 lower-level flood warnings were also in place, meaning that flooding was expected.

Some 480 flood warnings and alerts were issued across England on Monday, the highest number on record, the agency said.

The storm's confirmed death toll rose to three as West Mercia Police said a body had been found in the

search for a 55-year-old woman who had been missing near Tenbury in Worcestershire since Sunday.

A man pulled from the water in the same incident was airlifted to a hospital, where he remains in stable condition, police said.

The weather system brought winds of more than 145 kph (90 mph) and up to 150 millimeters (6 inches) of rain to Britain over the weekend. And the tumult is not over.

"We expect disruptive weather into the middle of this week bringing a significant flood risk for the West Midlands, and there are flood warnings in place across much of England," said Toby Willison, Executive Director of Operations at Britain's Environment Agency.

Forecasters said river levels in parts of northern England had yet to reach their peak. In the northern England city of York, authorities were piling up more than 4,000 sandbags as the River Ouse continued to rise. It's expected to peak on Tuesday.

Other residents in Wales and western England were cleaning up Monday after the storm flooded roads,

railways, homes and businesses and disrupted travel across Britain. Some told stories of fleeing for their lives.

Jeanette Cox, 68 and her daughter Rachel woke up to the sound of water in their home in the Welsh village of Nantgarw, near Cardiff, about at 4 am. Sunday. Cox said the only object that survived downstairs was her wedding day photograph that she had kept on a windowsill. Her husband Bill died from cancer in 2009.

"It was pitch black," she said. "All you could hear was the water running. I've never seen anything like it. I was very frightened."

Britain's environment secretary said climate change was making extreme weather events more common. But Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Conservative government denied it was unprepared for such storms.

"We'll never be able to protect every single household, just because of the nature of climate change and the fact that these weather events are becoming more extreme, but we've done everything that we can do with a significant sum of mon-

ey," Environment Secretary George Eustice said.

In Germany, at least nine people were injured in weather-related car accidents as high winds brought trees down onto roads and train tracks.

A commuter train with 67 passengers also crashed into a fallen tree in the western German city of Dortmund, but nobody was injured. And in the German city of Hamburg, the city's famous fish market was flooded for the second time this month.

Further north, strong winds and heavy rains caused flooding, road closures and electricity outages across the Nordic and Baltic regions and forced the cancellation of several ferries between Denmark and Norway.

In Denmark, the southwestern city of Kolding was flooded as gale force winds and heavy rains battered the area. In nearby Horsens, police protectively evacuated residents near Bygholm Lake out of fear that a levee would collapse.

In southwestern Norway, more than half a dozen roads and several mountain passes were closed amid heavy snow and high winds.

UN: Impact of long Libya war on civilians is 'incalculable'

UNITED NATIONS (AP)—The U.N. humanitarian coordinator for Libya said Monday the impact of the country's nine-year war on civilians "is incalculable," pointing to its intensity escalating "exponentially" since a rebel commander launched an offensive last April, casualties rising and almost 900,000 people now needing assistance.

Yacoub El Hillo said a 55-point road map for ending the war in Libya which was agreed to by 12 key leaders at a conference in Berlin on Jan. 19, endorsed last week by the U.N. Security Council, and reaffirmed at a meeting in Munich on Sunday has seen "serious violations" in the last 10 days, with new strikes in and around the capital Tripoli.

El Hillo, who is also the U.N. deputy representative for the oil-rich North African country, said in a briefing to journalists by video from Tripoli that the protracted conflict is "severely impacting civilians in all parts of the country on a scale never seen before."

The Berlin peace plan backed a cease-fire, called for compliance with a U.N. arms embargo, and said all countries must refrain from interfering in the conflict between the U.N.-recognized government and the rebel forces of self-styled Gen. Khalifa Hifter, and the country's internal affairs.

On a potentially positive note, a Joint Military Commission comprising representatives of the warring parties is scheduled to begin a second round of talks Tuesday in Geneva under U.N. auspices, with the aim of agreeing to a lasting cease-fire.

The first meeting of a Libyan Political Forum aimed at forming a new government has also been scheduled for Feb. 26 in Geneva.

Libya has been in turmoil since 2011, when a civil war toppled longtime dictator Moammar Gadhafi, who was later killed. In the chaos that followed the country was divided.

A weak U.N.-recognized administration that holds the capital of Tripoli and parts of the country's west is backed by Turkey, which recently sent thousands of soldiers and military equipment to Libya, and to a lesser degree Qatar and Italy as well as local militias.

On the other side is a rival government in the east that supports self-styled Gen. Khalifa Hifter, whose forces launched an offensive to capture the capital last April 4 and are backed by the United Arab Emirates and Egypt as well as France and Russia.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has decried violations of the U.N. embargo since the Berlin conference by supporters of the warring sides.

Killing of 7-year-old stokes anger in Mexico over femicides

MEXICO CITY (AP)—The killing of a 7-year-old girl on the southern outskirts of Mexico City has stoked rising anger over the brutal slayings of women, including one found stabbed to death and skinned earlier this month.

The city prosecutor's office said Monday that investigators identified a body found over the weekend as that of Fatima, a grade-school student who was taken by a stranger on Feb. 11. By law, prosecutors don't give the full name of victims.

Her body was found wrapped in a bag and abandoned in a rural area on Saturday and was identified by genetic testing. The cause of death

has not been released. Five people have been questioned in the case, and video footage of her abduction exists.

Mexico City prosecutor Ernestina Godoy said the girl's murder would not go unpunished. The investigation is focused on identifying the woman seen walking away from the school with the girl.

Guillermo Anton Godínez, the girl's grandfather, said Monday that his daughter arrived at the school 15 or 20 minutes after the woman led the girl away. He added that his granddaughter had left the school wearing her uniform, but the woman had put a green shirt and pants on her.

His daughter was initially told that

authorities couldn't begin searching for 72 hours after her disappearance, he said. However, the prosecutors office said an Amber alert was issued about the girl's disappearance the same day that relatives reported her missing.

Prosecutors' spokesman Ulises Lara offered a \$100,000 reward for information on the person who picked her up when she left school.

Mexico City Mayor Claudia Sheinbaum personally accompanied the girl's mother during the legal paperwork involved in filing charges and picking up the girl's body. "We are going to accompany the family, and justice must be done," Sheinbaum said.

The girl's mother, Maria Magdalena Antón, appeared angry and distraught outside prosecutors' offices. "Justice has to be done, for my daughter and for all women," she said.

She said investigators made the family wait hours and travel across the city to even file a missing person report. Other relatives accused police of not acting quickly enough.

"She could have been found alive, but nobody paid attention to us," said Sonia López, the girl's aunt. López also said there had been longstanding questions about the mother's ability to care for her children, but that city health and family welfare agencies had not helped them.

Focus

NAJAF, Iraq (AP) — When Iraq's top Shiite cleric underwent surgery for a fractured bone last month, it sent shivers around the country and beyond. "May God heal Iraq," read a photo of Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani that circulated online.

Frantic supporters shared prayers. Anti-government protesters hung photos of the black-turbaned cleric with a long white beard and bushy eyebrows, declaring, "The hearts of the revolutionaries are with you." Al-Sistani's well-wishers included officials from both Iran and the United States, the bitter rivals for influence in Iraq.

The incident put into focus the question: what will happen after al-Sistani, who turns 90 this year, is gone? The question has gained added importance for an Iraq deeply embroiled in U.S.-Iranian tensions and gripped by months of anti-government protests.

Al-Sistani's death would rob Iraq of a powerful voice whose sway among followers and positions against foreign intervention are believed to have curbed further Iranian influence. He sought to restrain Iranian-backed Shiite militias accused of abuses and moderate the government, repeatedly stating that the Iraqi people are the source of authority.

Iran, analysts say, will likely try to exploit the vacuum to expand its influence among Iraq's Shiites.

The Iranians "don't want another al-Sistani ... They don't want somebody who is strong, who overshadows their own supreme leader," said Abbas Kadhim, director of the Iraq Initiative at the Atlantic Council. While none of al-Sistani's potential successors are "in Iran's pockets," Tehran can benefit from a weak figure.

"If this person is silent and doesn't intervene, people will look elsewhere for guidance," Kadhim said.

Iran's post-al-Sistani ambitions may be complicated by Iraq's wave of protests since October, which showed a vein of resentment among Shiites to Tehran's power. Many Iraqis have also been angered at how U.S. and Iranian hostilities have played out on their soil, including last month's U.S. drone strike that killed top Iranian general Qassem Soleimani in Baghdad.

One cleric in the Shiite holy city of Najaf said he felt "scared for Iraq" when he learned of al-Sistani's surgery. When he dies, Iran could use its "revolutionary slogans" to try to attract followers to its supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, he said.

But he argued that al-Sistani's support for peaceful protesters strengthened Najaf's hand among the public against Iran's forays. "Things weren't that complicated for Iran" before, he said.

Al-Sistani has been a counterweight to Iran, not only in politics.



In this Sunday, Feb. 2, 2020, Shiite seminary students attend a lecture at "Hawza" seminary, in the holy shrine of Imam Ali, the son-in-law, and cousin of the Prophet Muhammad and the first Imam of the Shiites, in Najaf, Iraq. Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, Iraq's top Shiite cleric, turns 90 this year, and when he recently had surgery it sent chills around the country and beyond. What happens when al-Sistani is gone? Iran is likely to try to exploit the void to gain followers among Iraq's Shiites. Standing in its way is the Hawza, the centuries-old institution of religious learning which al-Sistani heads and which follows its own tradition-bound rules.

Aging Shiite cleric a powerhouse in Iraq. WHAT COMES AFTER?

By QASSIM ABDUL-ZAHRA and MARIAM FAM

Associated Press

He represents a school of thought in Shiism opposed to direct rule by clerics, the system in place in Iran, where Khamenei has the final word in all matters.

Al-Sistani and Khamenei both hold the rank of "marja taqlid" — or "object of emulation," a figure that pious Shiites revere as a spiritual guide. But the majority of Iraq's Shiites follow al-Sistani, as do many in Iran and around the world.

Fending off Iran is a concern for many in the Najaf Hawza, the esteemed institution of Shiite religious learning from which al-Sistani's successor will emerge.

"Iran ... wants a political stance (in Iraq) that supports it," said a senior cleric there. "It's the Hawza that creates balance. Politicians have lost that balance. If the Hawza loses it too, then Iran will have won both on the religious front and on the political front."

Another senior cleric said "it would be stupid not to worry" about Iran. "But it's all about resistance. Either an outside body can penetrate, or you can stop it." All the clerics spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity surrounding succession and because Hawza senior clergy rarely talk to the media.

Al-Sistani doesn't make public appearances and doesn't deliver sermons — his messages are put out by intermediaries.

He has been recovering from his surgery and this month has resumed receiving visitors at his modest home near Najaf's gold-domed Imam Ali Shrine.

An AP reporter had a rare visit with him in July. With a scorching Najaf sun beating down, scores lined up outside the narrow alley leading to his home. In a sitting room, al-Sistani spoke with the reporter softly and deliberately in accented Arabic, a relic of his Iranian origin. A dark robe draped around his slender, slightly hunched figure, he made eye contact and gesticulated with one hand, seemingly in good health.

Despite the modest trappings, al-Sistani is a larger-than-life figure to whom millions of Shiites look for guidance on even the smallest questions of life.

Under his leadership, the Hawza's ranks swelled after dwindling under the repressive rule of Saddam Hussein. Would-be Shiite clerics from around the world flock to the Hawza, learning from the faith's most respected scholars, whose influence in turn resonates around the Shiite community. Religious classes are dispersed among mosques or buildings in the run-down alleys of Najaf's Old City.

The Hawza prides itself on its independence, governed by centuries-old traditions and unwritten rules. Status is earned by years of

building up a reputation for religious knowledge and respect among students and peers.

The system for al-Sistani's succession is complex and informal: no one is "appointed" and there won't be an immediate declaration of a successor. It can take months or even years until one cleric garners enough followers and influence to gain consensus as the new leading "object of emulation."

A group of the Hawza's eminent clerics known as "Ahl al-Khobia" or "the people of expertise," guide the process, steering the faithful toward a figure based on piety and superiority of knowledge.

The most likely contenders, if they outlive al-Sistani, are two grand ayatollahs — Afghan-born Mohammed Ishaq al-Fayadh, who is 89 or 90, and Najaf-born Mohammed Saeed al-Hakim, who is in his 80s. Given their advanced age, observers have floated possible candidates from the younger generation.

Al-Sistani's influential son, Mohamed Reda, could play a role in shaping the succession if he threw his weight behind a candidate who he thinks will follow in his father's footsteps, said Baghdad-based analyst Sajad Jiyad. "It's important for him that al-Sistani's school is cemented."

Still, some question if a figure as broadly accepted as al-Sistani will emerge or how long that can take. The

senior clerics who spoke to the AP — and who belong to the Ahl al-Khobia — were confident the Hawza's cloistered ways and deeply entrenched traditions were difficult for Iran to penetrate and that no successor can veer far from al-Sistani's path.

"Our Sunni surroundings won't allow for Iraq to become a Shiite religious state," said one of them. "The international community won't allow for another Iranian copy in Iraq, nor does our social reality," he added, referring to Iraq's diverse religious and ethnic groups.

Iran has tried. It was believed to have been trying to build a following in Najaf for an Iranian cleric close to its supreme leader as a potential successor of al-Sistani. But the cleric, Grand Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi, died in 2018.

Even as he shunned a direct rule by clerics, al-Sistani weighed in actively throughout Iraq's turbulent times, helping shape the rise in power of the country's Shiite majority.

His positions forced Iraq's post-Saddam American administrators to significantly revise their transition plans. In 2004, it took his return from London, where he was treated for a heart condition, to end fighting in Najaf between a Shiite militia and U.S. and Iraqi forces.

Still, his influence had limits. He spoke out against reprisals against Sunnis during times of sectarian bloodshed in the mid-2000s but that didn't stop the vicious killings. In 2014, thousands heeded his calls for Iraqis to take up arms against the onslaught of the Sunni Islamic State group. That helped defeat the militants; but it also filled the ranks of Iranian-backed Shiite militias accused of abuses against Sunnis, which have become a significant political force.

Anger at Iran's influence has helped fuel the current protest movement, the largest seen in Iraq. Protesters complain of corruption by politicians and many reject both Iranian and American interference.

Al-Sistani has voiced support for the demands of peaceful protesters and denounced the crackdown against them. He has also spoken out against all foreign intervention and called for an Iraq "that is ruled by its children with no role for outsiders in its decisions." Clerics in Najaf said the word "outsiders" was seen as a harsh message to Iran.

Many protesters view him as a protector and sympathizer. But their attitude is complicated, given many of them dream of Iraq moving beyond sectarian allegiances.

At a march in Baghdad's Tahrir Square, the epicenter of protests, 24-year-old Yassir Kadhim carried a banner with the cleric's image.

"As long as he supports the protests, we will continue. We will continue to death ... because the blood of martyrs has been spilled," he said. But while he follows al-Sistani, he said he would carry on protesting regardless.

"I went out for the sake of this homeland, not for anyone's sake."

Good Housekeeping

By JULIE WASHINGTON
THE PLAIN DEALER

Q: With Cuyahoga County's plastic-bag ban taking effect this year (and already in place at many Giant Eagle stores and other locations), people are starting to use reusable bags. Can reusable bags make you sick, and what are the best ways to keep them clean and free of germs?

A: Reusable bags help the environment, but they could spread food-borne illnesses if they aren't used, washed and stored correctly. Raw foods placed in reusable bags could cross-contaminate other foods with E. coli, salmonella and listeria.

It gets worse when dirty bags are stuffed inside a hot car trunk, the perfect place for germs to breed.

"You've made a petri dish," said Dr. Neha Vyas, family medicine specialist at the Cleveland Clinic.

Reusable grocery bags are on the minds of Cuyahoga County shoppers because of the county's ban on single-use plastic bags. The ban went into effect Jan. 1, but it will not be enforced until July 1 to give stores more time to make the transition, said Sheryl Harris, director of the Cuyahoga County Department of Consumer Affairs.

The ban only applies to bags given at the check-out, Harris said. Plastic bags for bulk foods, fresh vegetables and deli items will still be available.

Also exempt are plastic bags used for restaurant leftovers, dry cleaning and newspapers. Paper bags aren't part of the ban. More details are available at the Cuyahoga County's plastic bag website, cuyahogacounty.us/byobag

The ban on single-use plastic bags is aimed at reducing the amount of waste going to landfills. More than 319 mil-

What are the best ways to keep reusable bags germ-free?



AP

Civic leaders gathered for a reusable bag giveaway, sponsored by Cuyahoga County and held at the Euclid Senior Center in January. Colorful reusable bags were distributed to about 150 seniors in attendance.

lion plastic bags become waste each year in Cuyahoga County, Harris said in an email. The average time a plastic bag is used is just 12 minutes, but can take up to 1,000 years to decompose, she said.

When stocking up on reusable shopping bags, choose cotton or canvas bags that can tolerate hot water and high dryer heat, said Ryan Sinclair, associate professor of environmental

microbiology at Loma Linda University School of Public Health. The heat helps to disinfect the bags, Sinclair said.

Using a disinfectant wipe to quickly clean a bag's interior isn't effective in killing germs, he said. The disinfectant wipe would need to be in contact with the bag's surface for a full two minutes in order to eliminate bacteria, Sinclair explained.

Research shows that dirty

reusable grocery bags can spread germs. A 2011 study from scientists at the University of Arizona and Loma Linda University — which Sinclair co-authored — found bacteria in 99% of bags tested. Half carried coliform bacteria while 8% carried E. coli, both indicating fecal contamination.

Hand or machine washing was found to reduce the bacteria in bags by more than 99.9%.

A study published in the international journal Food Control in 2019 found high percentages of antibiotic resistant microbes when 30 reusable plastic (polypropylene) bags were analyzed.

Here are tips for food safety and how to clean various types of bags. Information came from Vyas, Sinclair, the American Cleaning Institute, TheSpruce.com, Good House-

By DEBBIE CARLSON
CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Don't let your home's infrastructure crumble

It's no secret that U.S. infrastructure is crumbling, but is your home's infrastructure in good shape?

Maintaining key features that make a home livable will save money down the road and may even fall under critical life-safety issues. These home maintenance checkups aren't sexy or fun, but they are necessary to keep a house in top shape.

While everything in a house eventually needs to be replaced, home experts flagged their top three infrastructure areas to maintain.

The home's structure. A home's roof, foundation and frame are equally critical to a livable home. Pat Knight,

training, licensing and inspection support manager of WIN Home Inspection, a national home inspection franchise, said to keep an eye on the roof as the seasons change, making sure the surface is free from debris and there is no damage. Get gutters cleaned, and make sure they're draining properly away from the home. Fall is a good time to get your gutters cleaned.

Checking the roof can be as simple as using a pair of binoculars from the yard, or it could mean hiring a company to inspect for potential damage up close.

"Deferred maintenance can drastically reduce the life expectancy of the roof, and replace-

ment is expensive," he said. Keep an eye on the home's bottom too. Angie Hicks, founder of Angie's List, a home services directory, says the fall season is a great time to check the home's foundation.

"If there's too much water—or too little—it will become the No. 1 cause for giving your foundation a shakeup," she said.

It can be difficult to get the moisture content right consistently, so Hicks gave a few tips. Ensure proper drainage away from the structure's surface, which can otherwise compromise the foundation's integrity. Subsurface or French drains can help in re-

gions where too little moisture is an issue, as can a strategic sprinkler system that prevents extreme drying/shrinking of the surrounding soil.

While looking at the foundation, look out for insects like carpenter ants or termites, especially in homes with wooden frames, said Beverley Kruskol, owner of M.Y. Pacific Building, a general contractor who has worked with high-end renovations, including for Mario Batali's restaurants in Los Angeles.

With climate change, insects like termites can now be a problem in areas that previously never had problems with these bugs. Termites cause

keeping and the OSU Extension Cuyahoga County office.

Tips for bag, food safety

Wash bags after each use, especially those used for meats, produce and precooked foods.

Label bags for meat, produce, dairy, canned goods and so on, to cut down on cross-contamination. "We don't realize having produce and dairy and meat together in bags can be harmful," Vyas said.

Keep bags for books, sports gear and other non-food items separate from food bags.

Use a cotton or canvas bag as a liner in insulated bags (can't be machine washed in hot water).

Make sure bags are completely dry before storing them.

Remove any cardboard inserts and turn each bag inside out before washing.

How to clean various bag types

Canvas and Cotton: Machine wash in hot water. Machine or line dry.

Insulated shopping bags: Hand wash in warm water and air dry.

Hemp and nylon: Hand or machine wash on gentle cycle with mild laundry detergent. Line or air dry.

Woven or nonwoven polypropylene: These bags are made from recycled plastics. Machine wash on gentle cycle, or hand wash. These bags should never be put in the dryer. Air or line dry.

In her column, patient advocacy writer Julie Washington will answer readers' questions about navigating health-care systems. (She will not address individual treatments.) Your comments may be published in a future story or column. Send questions and comments for publication—including your name, city and daytime phone number—to jwashington@plaind.com. You can also find Julie on Twitter @JulieEWash.

easy things you can do yourself to ensure the longest life for your HVAC system," she said.

Plumbing. Leaky faucets and overflowing toilets are obvious signs of problems, but stealth leaks can cause a lot of damage, Kruskol said, such as mold.

"It's really not a bad idea to have a plumber come out periodically and check the system. Roots can grow into pipes. Sprinklers end up splashing against the house, which can deteriorate outdoor brick, stucco and foundations," she said.

Keep an eye on water bills, and don't let leaky faucets go dripping, especially for environmental considerations.

"It's a problem for all of us. Yes, water rates are higher, but we're all going to be affected by the lack of water," she said.

Life & Style

Museum's Rembrandt knockoff turns out to be the real thing



This photo provided by Allentown Art Museum shows restoration of a painting called "Portrait of a Young Woman."

Thanks to modern technology and some expert detective work, a nearly 400-year-old painting that had long been attributed to an unknown artist in Rembrandt's workshop has now been judged to have been a work of the Dutch master himself.

For decades, the Allentown Art Museum displayed an oil-on-oak panel painting called "Portrait of a Young Woman" and credited it to "Studio of Rembrandt." Two years ago, the painting was sent to New York University for conservation and cleaning.

There, conservators began removing layers of overpainting and dark, thick varnish that had been added over centuries—and they began to suspect Rembrandt himself was responsible for the original, delicate brushwork underneath.

"Our painting had numerous layers

of varnish and that really obscured what you could see of the original brushwork, as well as the original color," said Elaine Mehalakes, vice president of curatorial affairs at the Allentown Art Museum.

Conservators used a variety of tools, including X-ray, infrared and electron microscopy, to bolster the case that it was the work of one of the most important and revered artists in history.

The scientific analysis "showed brushwork, and a liveliness to that brushwork, that is quite consistent with other works by Rembrandt," said Shan Kuang, a conservator at New York University's Institute of Fine Arts who restored "Portrait of a Young Woman."

Outside experts who examined the 1632 painting after the completion of its two-year restoration concurred with the NYU assessment that it's an authentic Rembrandt.

"We're very thrilled and excited," Mehalakes said. "The painting has this incredible glow to it now that it just didn't have before. You can really connect with the portrait in the way I think the artist meant you to."

When "Portrait of a Young Woman" was bequeathed to the museum in 1961, it was considered to be a Rembrandt. About a decade later, a group of experts determined that it had been painted by one of his assistants. Such changes in attribution are not unusual: Over the centuries, as many as 688 and as few as 265 paintings have been credited to the artist, according to Mehalakes.

The museum has not had the painting appraised—and has no intention of selling it—but authenticated works by Rembrandt have fetched tens of millions of dollars.

The painting, currently in the museum's vault, will go on public display starting June 7. (AP)

Hollywood barriers fall in milestone Oscars for 'Parasite'

By JAKE COYLE
AP FILM WRITER

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Before Bong Joon Ho's "Parasite" made history as the first non-English best picture winner in Academy Awards history, he made a modest plea to American moviegoers: Don't be afraid of subtitles.

Accepting the award for best foreign-language film at the Golden Globes last month, the South Korean filmmaker, who has worked in both Seoul and Hollywood, said: "Once you overcome the 1-inch-tall barrier of subtitles, you will be introduced to so many more amazing films."

Reflecting on those words backstage at the Oscars while he clutched several of his statuettes, Bong wondered whether those boundaries were already breaking. He had good reason to. In a thrilling and raucously applauded upset, the revolutionary win for "Parasite" ended a more than nine-decade English-language monopoly on cinema's top prize.

"People were already overcoming these barriers through streaming services, YouTube, social media," said Bong through his translator. "In the environment that we currently live in, I think we're all connected. Naturally we will come to a day when a foreign language film or not, it doesn't really matter."

Hollywood's reach has long ex-

tended to all corners of the globe, but it has less frequently returned the favor. It's an exporter, not an importer. Even though the American film industry was built largely by immigrants, on Oscar night, its gaze has usually been turned inward.

But that's changing, and nothing showed it more than the weekend's incredible double-feature of winners. Before "Parasite" won over several Oscars, Chinese-American director Lulu Wang's "The Farewell" triumphed at Saturday's Film Independent Spirit Awards. Wang's family drama stars an all-Asian cast and was filmed in both Mandarin and English.

"The Farewell," one of the most successful indie films at the box office last year, also won best supporting performance by a female actor, for Chinese actress Zhao Shuzhen. Wang thanked Film Independent for "honoring a woman from China who a lot of people earlier in the year could barely pronounce her name."

"Parasite" was, in many ways, an extraordinary exception to the norm. The film, a ferocious tragicomedy about a family of grifters who leech onto a wealthy family, inspired nearly universal praise for its cunning construction and for the utter command of Bong, whose last two films ("Okja," for Netflix; "Snowpiercer," for The Weinstein Company's Radius label) were largely English. Its mastery was simply too much for voters to deny.



Bong Joon-ho holds the Oscars for best original screenplay, best international feature film, best directing, and best picture for "Parasite" at the Governors Ball after the Oscars on Sunday, Feb. 9, 2020, at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles. (AP)

And the affable Bong, a filmmaker whose genre manipulations owe much to the American filmmakers he has frequently praised on his way to Oscar glory, was already widely respected throughout Hollywood—just as he is in Korea, where his films are regularly blockbusters. ("Parasite" has grossed \$35.5 million in the United States and Canada but \$72 million in South Korea.)

Bong was appreciated, too, for successfully staring down Harvey Weinstein in a battle over the final cut of "Snowpiercer." When "Parasite" made its debut at the Cannes Film Festival in May, the response was so overwhelming that Alejandro Iñárritu's jury said its choice for

the Palme d'Or was unanimous. The indie distributor Neon, led by Tom Quinn, prepared "Parasite" for an underdog, multi-category Oscar campaign, one aided by a historic win at the Screen Actors Guild Awards.

But "Parasite" is also part of a continuum. It was only the 11th foreign-language film ever nominated for best picture but the third in the last decade, following "Amour" and "Roma," which last year narrowly missed defeating "Green Book." The silent 2012 winner "The Artist" was also a French production. And before Bong took best director on Sunday, only two of the last 10 directing winners were American-born.

At a time when the national dis-

course often signals different attitudes about national borders, the Oscars have pushed in the other direction. On Monday, the Asia Society said of the win for "Parasite": "Without question, this is a bridge-building moment." The film's victory resonated worldwide but especially in its native country. A headline in South Korea's biggest newspaper, Chosun Ilbo, blared: "Can you believe that 'Parasite' won the Academy best picture? It rewrote the Academy's 92-year-old history."

Yet some were less enthusiastic about the film academy's newly global purview. A widely discussed post on Mother Jones on Monday lamented reading film subtitles. Conservative BlazeTV host Jon Miller on Twitter criticized Bong's acceptance speech, spoken largely in Korean and translated by an interpreter. "These people are the destruction of America," wrote Miller.

But few films have inspired the kind of celebration that "Parasite" did at the Dolby Theatre, where the crowd greeted the film's best picture win with thunderous applause. For some, the film's win was a tremendous relief and a much-needed counterpoint to an Oscars field that was otherwise notably lacking in diversity. "Parasite" also followed the much-debated win last year for "Green Book," a film many saw as racially retrograde.

Taylor Swift and the cost of speaking out on politics or staying silent

By DAN DELUCA
THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER

Early on in "Miss Americana," the new Taylor Swift documentary, the then-16-year-old singer takes a moment to celebrate "Tim McGraw," the 2006 hit that made her the youngest artist ever to write a No. 1 country song that she also performed.

"I give myself, like, five seconds a day to say, 'Yes, this is happening!'" the curly-haired, whip-smart teenager exults. "The rest of the time I'm trying to figure out how to make it last."

She hasn't done too badly: seven million-selling albums, two Grammy album of the year trophies and legions of fans who pack stadiums wherever she goes. And her latest album, last year's "Lover," is both her most mature effort and a creative rebound after the mild disappointment of 2017's "Reputation."

Yet, to hear Swift tell it in the Netflix movie directed by Lana Wilson, all that success came at a cost: keeping her mouth shut.

"Miss Americana" is about Swift becoming self-aware. It starts slowly, tracking her rise to fame and rehashing battles with Kanye West and Kim Kardashian.

The doc gets seriously compelling, though, when it sends a camera into the recording studio to capture her creative process, and when it focuses on two transformative events outside.

The first was a 2017 trial stemming from the singer's al-

legation that Denver DJ David Mueller sexually assaulted her during a 2013 promo event. Swift won a judgment against him—the \$1 that she asked for—and Mueller's \$3 million defamation suit against her was dismissed.

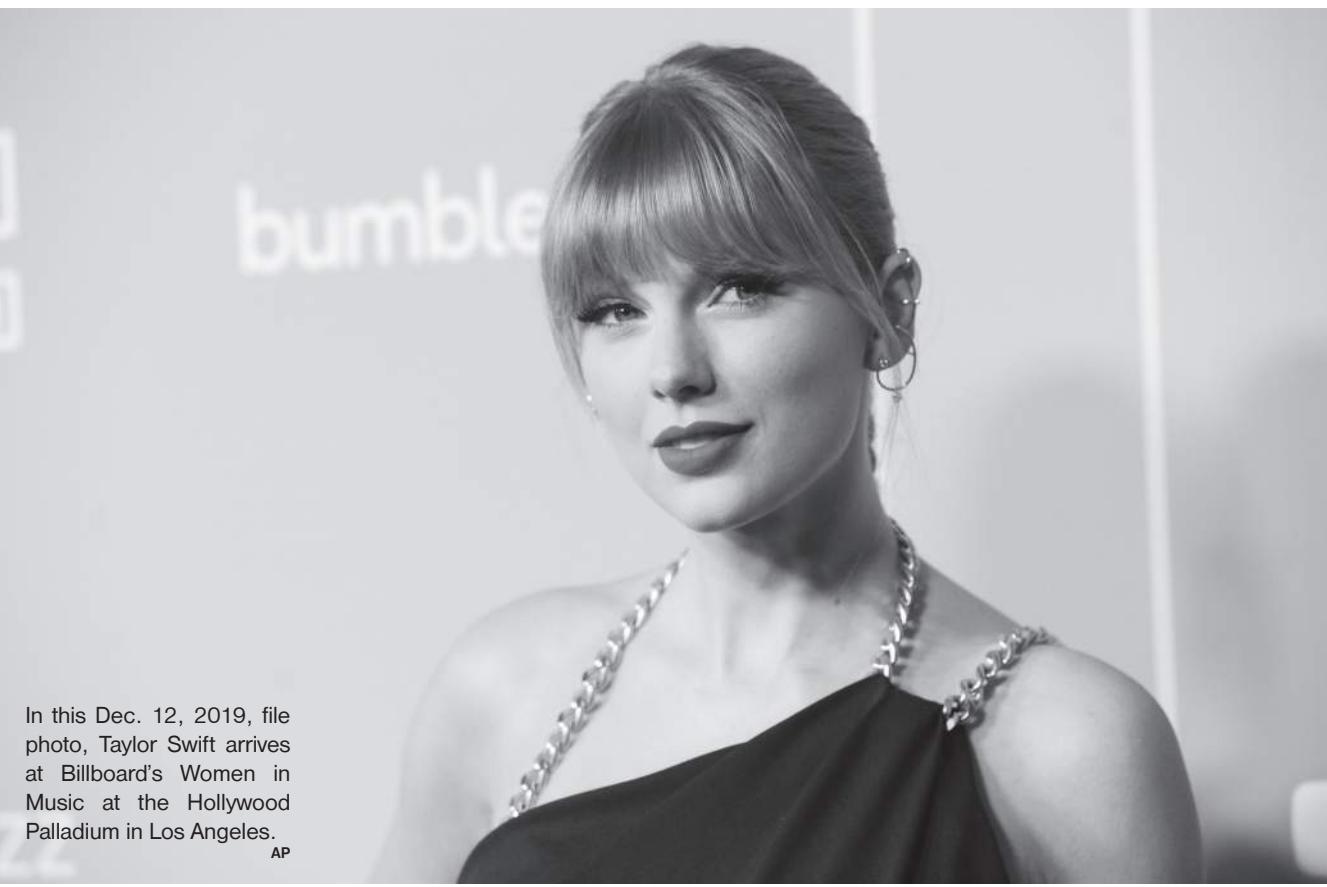
The second was her decision during the 2018 midterm elections to speak out politically—specifically against conservative Tennessee Republican Sen. Marsha Blackburn, who Swift called "Trump in a wig." Swift was appalled by her vote against reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act. Blackburn went on to defeat Democratic opponent Phil Bredesen.

A central scene pits Swift and mother Andrea against the men in the room. Among them is her father, Scott, who asks, "Did Bing Crosby do it? Did Bob Hope do it?" suggesting she shouldn't risk alienating fans.

For Swift, though, striving to be the good girl is no longer viable. "I've been doing it for 15 years, and I'm tired of it," she says.

Wokeness is manifest both in "Lover's" cleverly feminist single "The Man" and in "Only The Young," the new song from "Miss Americana" that aims to be a youth vote anthem.

Swift's decision to engage politically stemmed from personal experiences, of course. And remaining neutral left her open to both being excoriated by the left for not taking a stance in the 2016 election and being appropriated by white supremacists as an "Aryan goddess."



In this Dec. 12, 2019, file photo, Taylor Swift arrives at Billboard's Women in Music at the Hollywood Palladium in Los Angeles. AP

But Swift's shift is a prime example of the predicament pop artists face, with pressure ramping up to take sides as the calendar moves inexorably toward November.

Choosing between a political stance and silence can be a business decision, as well as a matter of principle. Protest art doesn't necessarily stand the test of time.

The likelihood of artists alienating their audiences varies widely. Rapper YG had little to lose by releasing "FDT" about Donald Trump in 2016. And in a nonmusical realm, Larry David made it clear he didn't care if he lost fans over his MAGA hat jokes in the new season of HBO's "Curb

Your Enthusiasm."

But a mainstream country act might be inclined to steer clear of politics, remembering the ostracism of the Dixie Chicks for criticizing George W. Bush in 2003.

This year, artists who have long made social commentary their metier have resolved to make their voices heard—among them, the Southern rock band Drive-By Truckers, who just released "The Unraveling," their state-of-the-nation statement. In "Thoughts and Prayers," singer Patterson Hood seethes with frustration at hollow responses to gun violence. But he also wishes he could block out the ceaseless partisan racket. "White noise

in my head, I think I need a filter, a pressure valve to keep from blowing up."

Green Day has gone in the other direction. In 2004, the pop-punk trio led by Billie Joe Armstrong were Bush bashers on "American Idiot,"

their rock opera that became a hit Broadway show.

But their new "Father Of All..." eschews politics, instead returning to the antics of their 1994 breakthrough "Dookie." The new album is fun, but feels cautious.

Melania Trump asks governors' spouses to tackle cyberassault

WASHINGTON (AP)—Melania Trump on Monday cited the influence of "Achy Breaky Heart" singer Billy Ray Cyrus as she asked spouses of the nation's governors to address cyberassault in their states.

"I know the many issues associated with online safety will be hard to stop, but there is a need now more than ever to teach our children healthy behavior to secure a safer future for all of them," the first lady said before she sat down with the spouses for a cozy lunch in the White House Blue Room.



Trump

Online safety is one of three components of the first lady's "Be Best" youth initiative. She and Cyrus met last November at the White House, where he introduced her to the Smiths, of Manchester, Tennessee.

Sixteen-year-old Channing Smith took his life in September 2019 after the high school junior found out that intimate messages he exchanged with a boy had been spread across social media by classmates. At the time, Channing had not been public about his sexuality.

"He was so ashamed and felt so hopeless that Channing committed suicide," Mrs. Trump said. "Since their tragic loss, the Smith family has been using their grief to partner with influencers such as Billy Ray

Cyrus to educate people about the dangers of cyberassault."

Cyrus, who achieved notoriety with the 1992 hit, "Achy Breaky Heart," performed at Channing's memorial service.

The first lady's focus on negative online behavior comes as her husband, President Donald Trump, uses his Twitter account to go after opponents. He has spent the days since his acquittal last week in the Senate impeachment trial sending belittling tweets about a handful of lawmakers who voted against him.

Mrs. Trump in the past has said she is mindful that people are skeptical of her focus on online bullying because of her husband's behavior. But she has said she won't be deterred from her goal of helping children and the next generation.

"I would like to take this time to ask that you and your spouses consider addressing this issue in your own home states so that no family will have to suffer from a loss like the Smiths," she told the spouses, who accompanied many of America's governors to Washington for their annual winter meeting and White House visit.

She asked them to help "promote values of encouragement, kindness, compassion and respect."

Benetton fires famed photographer over insensitive remarks

MILAN (AP)—Photographer Oliviero Toscani made a career out of provocative advertising campaigns for Benetton, the Italian clothing brand famed for its colorful knitwear. But that decades-long relationship has been severed after Toscani outraged relatives of victims in the deadly 2018 Genoa bridge collapse.

Toscani told RAI television this week, "who cares about a bridge collapse?" He was responding to a public flap over a photograph of founding members of the Sardines political protest movement alongside key members of the Benetton family, which controls the company that maintained the bridge.

The president of the committee to remember the 43 people who died Aug. 14, 2018 in the Morandi Bridge collapse called the remarks "inopportune and confused."

"It could be that (Toscani) travels by helicopter, and using a bridge is for com-

moners," Egle Possetti said. "Unfortunately, many Italians travel over bridges every day, and unfortunately some people will remain forever under 'that bridge,' certainly not due to some stray lightning strike. Forty-three innocent deaths count little for him, but for us they were everything."

Toscani apologized in an interview with *La Repubblica* published Thursday. "I am sorry. More: I am ashamed to apologize. I am humanly destroyed and deeply pained."

But the damage was done.

Benetton said in a statement Thursday that the group and its chairman, Luciano Benetton, "completely disassociates itself from Mr. Toscani's remarks and acknowledges the impossibility of continuing the professional relationship with its creative director."

It added that "Luciano Benetton and the entire com-

pany renew their sincere closeness to the families of the victims and to all those who have been involved in this terrible tragedy."

The Benetton family, as controlling stakeholder in the Autostrade highway company that maintained the Morandi bridge, has been embattled ever since the tragedy as the government squabbles over whether to revoke its agreement to operate thousands of kilometers of Italian toll highways.

So the photo showing the founders of the Sardines movement alongside the Benettons was widely criticized as a misstep by the less than three-month-old group.

Since its founding in November, the group has mobilized tens of thousands to protest against the growing popularity of right-wing leader Matteo Salvini. The

Taylor Swift's father safe after fight with burglar

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP)—Taylor Swift's father recently fought a burglar who broke into his \$4 million Florida penthouse, a newspaper is reporting.

The Tampa Bay Times said that Scott Swift returned to his home in the Vinoy Place Tow-

ers in St. Petersburg on Jan. 17 just moments after 30-year-old Terrence Hoover used an emergency escape stairwell to climb 13 floors to enter it.

The men fought before Hoover ran away, the paper reports, citing police records. Hoover has a lengthy arrest re-

cord that includes domestic violence by strangulation, aggravated battery, burglary, aggravated assault with a deadly weapon and kidnapping and false imprisonment, the paper said.

Swift picked Hoover out of a photo lineup and police say Hoover called them to report

the altercation. Hoover could not be found, however, until last week, when he was arrested on burglary charges. He was being held Monday on \$50,000 bond.

Taylor Swift was not with her father and it is unclear whether the intruder targeted

the home. The 30-year-old singer lives elsewhere.

Hoover's mother told the newspaper that her son got lost while searching for his estranged wife and should only

be charged with trespassing.

The penthouse encompasses the entire top floor of one Vinoy tower and includes 5,359 square feet, three bedrooms and three full baths.

Tom Stoppard to receive PEN America writing award

NEW YORK (AP)—British playwright Tom Stoppard and the Canadian poet and fiction writer M. NourbeSe Philip are among those being honored next month by PEN America, the literary and human rights organization.

PEN announced Wednesday that Stoppard will receive the \$25,000 PEN/Mike Nichols Writing for Performance Award for "Leopoldstadt," a new work set in the Jewish quarter of early 20th century Vienna that the 82-year-old Stoppard has said may be his last play. The Nichols prize,

established last year and named for the late film and stage director, was previously given to the playwright-filmmaker Kenneth Lonergan.

Philip, whose books include the poetry collections "Thorns" and "Salmon Courage" and the novel "Looking for Livingstone," has won the \$50,000 PEN/Nabokov Award for international literature. Others given the Nabokov award include Edna O'Brien and Philip Roth.

PEN will present the awards March 2 at Town Hall in Manhattan, with Seth Meyers serving as host.

US docu film crew chasing Poland Holocaust story may face charges

WARSAW, Poland (AP)—A team of U.S. award-winning documentary filmmakers pursuing a Holocaust-era story in western Poland could face charges of unauthorized excavation work, punishable by up to two years in prison, a Polish prosecutor said Friday.

Seven filmmakers, mostly from Los Angeles, are researching a World War II story about a collection of valuable postage stamps seized from Jews and reportedly hidden in a basement in 1945 by a German Nazi officer, Rudolf Wohlmann.

The filmmakers talked to Wohlmann's children and obtained confirmation of the address where the collection was supposedly hidden as the Nazis fled the advancing So-

viet army. The team includes Academy Award-winning producers and directors Bill Guttentag and Dan Sturman.

Regional prosecutor Radoslaw Wrebiak said the film crew failed to obtain the required permit for their excavation work and that police in the western city of Legnica were investigating their activities in the basement of an apartment building dating back to the late 19th century and considered to have historical value.

The filmmakers said on Facebook that the aim of their "Liegnitz Plot" project is to "confirm the story, recover the stamps, and return them to their rightful owners," in remembrance of the 6 million Holocaust victims.

Ratings for NBA All-Star Game rise by 8 percent

NEW YORK (AP)—Ratings for the NBA All-Star Game were up 8% over last year, with an average of 7.3 million viewers watching Sunday night's broadcast on TNT.

About 8 million viewers were tuned in for the end of the game, where LeBron James' team defeated Giannis Antetokounmpo's team 157-155 in the first target-score format in All-Star history. The fourth quarter was untimed and was broadcast commercial-free.

TNT's pregame coverage, which included tributes to Kobe Bryant, averaged 6.3 million viewers. That figure



AP
LeBron James of the Los Angeles Lakers celebrates during the second half of the NBA All-Star basketball game Sunday, Feb. 16, 2020, in Chicago.

represented a 19% increase over viewership for the same show last year.

For the weekend—including Friday's Rising Stars

game and Saturday's showing of the Skills Competition won by Miami's Bam Adebayo, the 3-point contest won by Sacramento's Buddy

Hield and the dunk contest won by Miami's Derrick Jones Jr.—Turner Sports said ratings were up 15% from last year.

Man hopes to move affair with his co-worker forward

DEAR ABBY: I have been communicating with this woman that I work with. She is currently seeing a guy she's been with for about four years. We have a clear connection and primal attraction, and have both discussed our feelings with each other. We communicate by texting. There is no communication through phone calls, for obvious reasons. Her man works for the same company but in a different building than we do. It's clear to me that he isn't good enough for her and doesn't know how to elevate himself to her level.

I let her know that if they were to break up, I would want to give it a try, and she said the same. She contacts me when she wants and flirts, but it's always at her convenience and not mine. We have "known" each other for about a year and a half now, and she claims she cares for me. My question to you is, how should I move this situation forward?

THREE'S A CROWD IN NEW YORK

DEAR CROWD: Try to control your libido and allow me to offer a flash of insight. This woman likes things just the way they are. You may not think her boyfriend is good enough for her and can't "elevate himself to her level," but the woman you have placed on this pedestal is someone who enjoys sneaking behind the back of someone she's been involved with for four years and discusses an exit strategy with a co-worker. Open your eyes. She's not seriously interested in you. She's enjoying a flirtation on her own terms, period. What makes you

think you are the only one she does this with?

DEAR ABBY: I have been overweight for half of my life. After many diets, exercises, weight loss and eventually gaining it all back, I'm planning to have gastric sleeve surgery within the next two months, or when my surgeon can place me on his schedule.

I have gone through all of the required office visits with my doctor, but haven't yet made a final decision because I'm so nervous about it. I have not mentioned this to my adult children or my parents. My parents are elderly and probably would hate it and worry, so I don't want them to know. As for my children, they probably won't like it either.

The surgery will mean I'll lose 60 to 70 pounds. Should I say something or wait until it becomes obvious? I'm a private person, and I absolutely don't want any negative or snarky remarks from neighbors or my church family.

Am I being ridiculous, selfish or silly? If I don't tell, how will I explain how I lost the weight without spilling my secret? I may tell everyone later on, but not right now.

GOT A SECRET IN THE SOUTH

DEAR GOT A SECRET: Wanting to be your best and healthiest self isn't ridiculous, selfish or silly. If you need surgical intervention to conquer your weight issues and your doctors agree, there is no reason to be defensive about

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



it. Attempting to hide a 70-pound weight loss would be like trying to smuggle dawn past a rooster.

As you pointed out, your weight loss will become obvious. When you are asked about it, all you need to say is that now that your weight problem is in the past, you prefer not discussing it, so please don't bring it up again. You may encounter fewer raised eyebrows if, once your doctors allow it, you start doing some walking so you can be seen by others adopting a healthier lifestyle. If you do, people may assume it's the reason you are thinner.

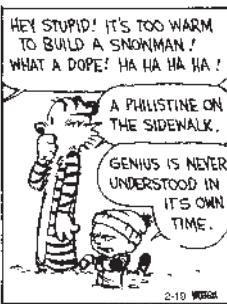
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Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes



By Bill Watterson



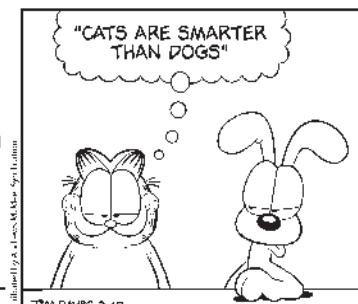
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Garfield®



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By Jim Davis



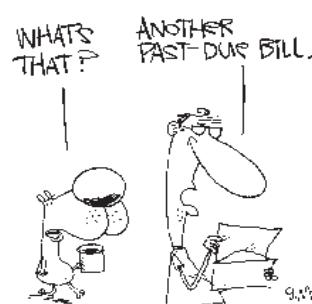
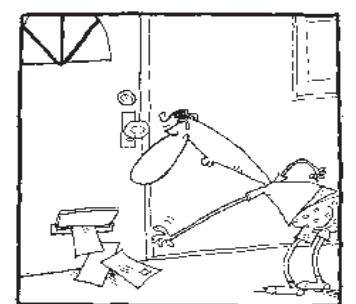
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Adam@home



By Bryan Basset

The Duplex



By Glenn McCoy



2-19 2020

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

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5	Scoundrel	5	words	43	NYPD	44	Tex-Mex	45	Tex-Mex	46	noise	47	Addict	48	affliction	49	ballerinas	50	home?	51	Disney	52	noise	53	noise	54	noise	55	noise	56	noise	57	noise							
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12	Take it	12	easy	45	Tex-Mex	46	treat	47	B vitamin	48	noise	49	Disney	50	noise	51	CEO	52	noise	53	CEO	54	noise	55	noise	56	noise	57	noise	58	noise	59	noise	60	noise					
13	Caustic	13	cleaner	47	B vitamin	48	51	Disney	52	noise	53	noise	54	noise	55	noise	56	noise	57	noise	58	noise	59	noise	60	noise	61	noise	62	noise	63	noise	64	noise						
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SUBMISSION DEADLINE: FEBRUARY 27, 2020 TIME: 10:00 AM

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/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORAZON P. ADA
CHCC DIRECTOR OF P&S

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/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORAZON P. ADA
CHCC DIRECTOR OF P&S

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

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Closing date: March 04, 2020

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Detailed information on qualifications and position descriptions for the above positions shall be picked up along with the application form from Monday-Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., except on holidays, at the CPA Administration Office (2nd Floor) of the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, Arrival Terminal or CPA Admin. Office at the Tinian International Airport or at the Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport. For additional information, please contact the CPA Human Resources Office by email at lorna.tenorio@cpa.gov.mp or by phone at (670)237-6500.

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CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

CNMI SCHOLARSHIP BOARD

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Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9910, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Scholarship Board of Directors is hereby giving notice that it will hold its Special Board Meeting on Thursday, February 20, 2020 at 2:00 pm on Saipan. The meeting will be held at the CNMI Scholarship Office Conference Room.

AGENDA

- I. Meeting Call to Order
- II. Determination of Quorum
- III. Review and Adoption of Agenda
- IV. Board Correspondences
- V. Public Comments
- VI. Committee Updates
- VII. New Business
 - a. AY2019-20 Award Amount Adjustment
 - b. FY 2020 Reduction
 - c. FY 2021 Budget Submission
- VIII. Administrator's Updates
- IX. Announcements & Next Meeting
- XII. Adjournment

/s/ Geralyn C. Dela Cruz, Chairwoman

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NEVADA (AP)—The oddsmakers in Las Vegas usually know what they're talking about.

But even they get things wrong from time to time, and this season in the NBA there have been a few notable misses from all those preseason prognostications—specifically, ones made in relation to the Memphis Grizzlies and Oklahoma City Thunder.

The Grizzlies have already topped most preseason projections for their win total. The sports books had them around 27 wins, and the Ja Morant-led club already has 28 wins and is holding down the Western Conference's No. 8 playoff spot with 28 games left.

"We are just young, very athletic and just get out and run," said Morant, a clear Rookie of the Year front-runner and probably the favorite at this point. "I feel like we all have something to prove. We just go out with this chip on our shoulder. We keep proving people wrong. But we go out every night and play together."

And the Thunder, who were expected to freefall after losing Paul George, were slotted by most books as a 32-win team or so. They're at 33-22, firmly in the West playoff race, led by a resurgent All-Star in Chris Paul.

It's clear that many thought the Thunder—the supposedly rebuilding Thunder—wouldn't be a postseason team. Then again, many of those same people probably thought Paul wasn't still capable of leading the way he has this season.

"For me, it's always about the journey," Paul said. "It's about working hard, and it's the analytics and the statistics that say at this age you can do this or you can do that. ... I think it's more about competing with yourself and not worry about what everybody else saying."

There have been a couple other very notable surprises in Miami and Toronto.

The Heat didn't make the playoffs last year, lost Dwyane Wade to retirement and brought in Jimmy Butler to lead a largely very young, very unproven core this season. And it has worked: The Heat are in the mix for home-court in the first round, and are thinking even bigger than that.

"It started in the summer," said first-time All-Star Bam Adebayo, this year's NBA Skills Competition winner. "It's building habits. Jimmy is one of those guys. He wants to hold people to a higher standard. Our organization wants



Chris Paul of the Oklahoma City Thunder dunks during the first half of the NBA All-Star basketball game Sunday, Feb. 16, 2020, in Chicago. AP

the AP count in the first three quarters, including four in a span of 33 seconds. In the fourth quarter, only three dunks.

Fouls: The teams combined for 14 fouls in the first three quarters, then committed 21 in the fourth.

Free throws: The teams were 5 for 13 in the first three quarters, 18 for 26 in the fourth.

Shooting: Team LeBron was shooting 52% after three quarters, then dipped to 42% in the fourth. But Team Giannis went from sailing to sputtering—59% in the first three quarters, 26% the rest of the way.

Kyrie's new job

Brooklyn guard Kyrie Irving has a new job: He's now a vice president of the National Basketball Players Association.

The NBPA had its winter meeting in the Bahamas on Monday. Irving is replacing Pau Gasol, whose three-year term expired.

"At this point in my career, I wanted to join forces with those guys and take a bigger role outside of the basketball court and within our union," Irving said. "I want to help move the union forward with innovative ideas, not only on social issues but also with business ventures into a new space."

Irving joins an executive committee that includes NBPA President Chris Paul, First Vice President Andre Iguodala, Vice Presidents Bismack Biyombo, Malcolm Brogdon, Jaylen Brown, CJ McCollum and Garrett Temple, and Secretary-Treasurer Anthony Tolliver.

The week ahead

A short week, but here's games to watch starting Thursday when the season resumes:

Thursday, Brooklyn at Philadelphia: Let the jostling for Eastern Conference positioning begin.

Friday, New Orleans at Portland: A pair of teams looking to get hot and sneak in down the stretch.

Saturday, Cleveland at Miami: The Heat will send Dwyane Wade's No. 3 jersey to the rafters.

Sunday, Boston at L.A. Lakers: Celtics vs. Lakers, especially when both are good, is always must-watch.

Monday, Memphis at L.A. Clippers: Grizzlies are No. 8 out West, but their remaining schedule is brutal.

to hold people to a higher standard. So it just made it all sync together. Everybody doesn't take anything personal when somebody gets on them. It's all love at the end of the day."

And then there's the Raptors.

They lost NBA Finals MVP Kawhi Leonard, the MVP of this year's All-Star Game. They lost Danny Green. They've been walloped this

year by injuries. Despite it all, they're No. 2 in the East right now and aren't just on pace to win more regular-season games than they did in their championship season a year ago—they're on pace to set a franchise record.

"The journey is the best part about it," Raptors All-Star guard Kyle Lowry said. "You've got to enjoy and have fun with the journey every

single day. ... The thing that matters to me is that we're continuing to be a better team every single night."

All-Star redux

It's worth taking one more look inside some numbers of that wild fourth quarter of Sunday's All-Star Game, and how the intensity got seriously ramped up with the new target-score, untimed-play format for

the last period in Chicago.

To begin, the game wasn't shorter with the clock being turned off and the teams playing for a score of 157—it was longer. An Associated Press analysis of the fourth quarter shows the teams were on the floor for about 14:11, more than the customary 12 minutes.

A few other nuggets:

Dunks: There were 50 by

For NBA players, a little rest now before a hectic finish

CHICAGO (AP)—And now, they rest.

Until Thursday, anyway. That's when the NBA comes back for a frantic eight-week sprint to the finish of the regular season, with teams having from anywhere between 25 and 29 games left to play before the 16-team field for the playoffs is filled and set.

The All-Star Game is over, Team LeBron defeating Team Giannis 157-155 in Chicago on Sunday night. Most players scurried onto private jets not long after the final buzzer for quick little getaways—places like Miami, Turks and Caicos, and the Bahamas (where some union meetings start Monday) were among the destinations.

So, the players will try to enjoy their last bit of relaxation, as the playoff push is about to get real.

"Obviously, when you come to All-Star weekend, basketball is going to be the main thing and the main thing

only," Los Angeles Lakers star LeBron James said in Chicago. "That's why you're here. That's what you see every day. We're dedicated to this weekend for not only ourselves and our family, but for the fans. So, I try to find a couple days after All-Star, after Sunday, to kind of just get away from the game, try to freshen back up and get ready for the last run of the regular season."

There are 12 teams that start Thursday: Milwaukee, Detroit, Miami, Atlanta, Brooklyn, Philadelphia, Charlotte, Chicago, Memphis, Sacramento, Houston and Golden State. Every other team resumes play Friday except for the Los Angeles Clippers, who get a couple extra days of break and won't get back on the floor until Saturday afternoon.

For the most part, the post-season teams are largely set. Milwaukee could clinch a playoff berth as early as this

coming weekend. The Bucks—46-8—are quietly on pace for the third-best regular season in NBA history. They're seven games in the loss column ahead of Toronto in the race for No. 1 in the Eastern Conference, four losses clear of the Lakers in the race for the league's best overall record.

"Our job is to take it, obviously, day by day," said Bucks star Giannis Antetokounmpo, the NBA's reigning MVP. "We want to win as many games as possible, but our goal is to win the whole thing. So obviously, as I said, you want to win every game. If you win every game, that would be great. But we cannot lose focus. We can't lose track of our actual goal, which is get better every day, keep learning every day, and win the whole thing."

Toronto, a team that many suspected would freefall after Kawhi Leonard and Danny Green left for the Los Angeles

Clippers in free agency, hits the break with the NBA's third-best record at 40-15. The Raptors, Boston, Miami, Philadelphia and Indiana can pretty much start making their East playoff plans. Out in the Western Conference, the Lakers, Denver, the Clippers, Utah, Houston, Oklahoma City and Dallas all have separated themselves in the playoff race as well.

That's 13 teams for 16 spots. In the East, Brooklyn and Orlando will seek to hang on to the last two spots. Out West, No. 8 Memphis has a four-game lead on Portland and is five games up on San Antonio—a team that hasn't missed the playoffs since 1997, but has some serious work to do in order to extend that streak.

"It feels good to be in a winning situation," Anthony Davis said. "I think being No. 1 in the West, we have something good going over there in L.A. I'm excited about our team."

MLB stars hammer Manfred over 'piece of metal' trophy crack



WEST PALM BEACH, Fla.

(AP)—Players who have won a World Series—and those who have come up short—seethed Monday at Commissioner Rob Manfred's reference to the sport's championship trophy as merely a "piece of metal," saying that comment reflected a disconnect between baseball's boss and those who produce the product on the field.

"It bothered me, man. I hated it. It made him sound really out of touch," said reliever Sean Doolittle, a member of the 2019 title-winning Washington Nationals. "That's the holy grail of our sport. That's what we show up for in the beginning of February, thinking about and working towards."

Added Doolittle: "I just can't believe how out of touch that is. You're the commissioner of our game. You're the steward of this game. That's a really special thing. It's an iconic symbol of our game. Please don't say that, even off-hand, even tongue-in-cheek."

As with so many things being talked about around the majors as spring training gets started, this all stems from the Houston Astros' sign-stealing scam in 2017 and 2018.

There have been calls for players involved to be punished in some way; MLB gave them immunity in exchange for cooperating with the investigation.

"I'm sure a lot of people were mad," three-time AL MVP Mike Trout said at Los Angeles Angels camp in Tempe, Arizona. "They think the punishment should be more or something."

Some think the Astros should be stripped of their 2017 championship, but Manfred said this on Sunday in an interview with ESPN: "The idea of an asterisk or asking for a piece of metal back seems like a futile act."

That phrasing did not sit well.

Doolittle and other players noted that the official name of the hardware itself is The Commissioner's Trophy.

"For him to devalue it the way he did yesterday just tells me how out of touch he is with the players in this game. At this point, the only thing devaluing that trophy is that it says 'commissioner' on it," said Justin Turner, whose Los Angeles Dodgers lost to the Astros in the 2017 Series.

"It's pretty obvious what everyone thinks should happen. I mean, no one in this clubhouse or in this room is asking for a trophy to be handed us, by any means. ... But at the same time, we understand how difficult it is to win a World Series. It's hard. It's really hard. And it's something that you have to earn," Turner said at LA's camp in Glendale, Arizona.



AP Washington Nationals pitcher Sean Doolittle is one of the Major League Baseball players seethed Monday at Commissioner Rob Manfred's reference to the sport's championship trophy as merely a "piece of metal."

"It's pretty evident to me that it wasn't earned and it's not something that a banner should be hung in their stadium (or) a trophy should be put up wherever their trophies go."

Like Turner, Evan Longoria has been to a World Series but not won one.

And as with Turner, Longoria was bothered by Manfred's words.

"Well, there's a couple of pieces of metal, right? You get a ring, too. That's a big piece of metal," Longoria said Monday after the San Francisco Giants' first full-squad workout in Scottsdale, Arizona. "I think everybody that plays the game knows it's not just a 'piece of metal.' It's the blood, sweat and tears that go into the, whatever, 175 games or whatever it is that it takes to win a World Series. The sacrifices. I don't know if he said that to make a funny or what, but it's obviously representative of something much bigger than that."

Joe Musgrove, currently with the Pittsburgh Pirates, pitched for the 2017 Astros and said he gets others' frustration with Manfred's comments.

"They don't just hand those out; there's a lot of work that goes into getting one of those. So I can understand why they're upset about it," Musgrove said in Bradenton, Florida. "For me, personally, I think the ring is something that everyone takes with them and that's a special piece you can carry with you forever. There's only one trophy that gets made. That might be more important to the manager than

it was suspicious," Rendon said. "It looked weird. They were (sitting) on balls that were very tough pitches, and just the way that they were playing the game. They're all talented players. I love those guys over there, especially what they've done in my city of Houston to help us out. But it definitely raises a lot of question marks, watching those games."

Meanwhile, Yankees shortstop Gleyber Torres feels the Houston Astros cheated "for sure" during the 2019 season.

Houston players have apologized for rules violations in their 2017 World Series championship run and also in 2018 but deny any misdeeds in 2019, when the Astros beat the Yankees in the AL Championship Series for the second time in three seasons.

"No, I don't believe them," Torres said on Monday. "If you cheat in 2017 and you won, why don't do it the next year and the next year, too?"

As an example, Torres talked about playing video games with pitcher Luis Severino in which he took advantage repeatedly after seeing his teammate's control panel.

Torres heard from others about possible Astros cheating but didn't believe it.

Manfred gets to take another swing at the topic when he holds a news conference in Arizona on Tuesday.

Trout rips cheating Astros, calls for bigger punishment

TEMPE, Ariz. (AP)—Mike Trout thinks the Houston Astros should pay more dearly for their cheating ways.

The Los Angeles Angels' three-time AL MVP ripped the Astros and questioned the discipline handed out by Major League Baseball on Monday after he reported to spring training. Trout joined the chorus of prominent big leaguers angry about Houston's rampant sign stealing on its way to the 2017 World Series title and beyond.

"It's sad for baseball," he said. "It's tough. They cheated. I don't agree with the punishments, the players not getting anything. It was a player-driven thing. It sucks, too, because guys' careers have been affected. A lot of people lost jobs. It was tough."

"Me going up to the plate knowing what was coming? It would be fun up there. A lot of guys lost respect for some of the guys."

Trout said a few members of the Astros reached out to him during the offseason to explain their side, but Trout didn't sound impressed.

"You don't know what helped them or what not," he said. "But if you know what's coming, that's definitely not right, for sure."

help them. I don't know if you take the trophy away or take the rings away, but they should definitely do something."

Trout doesn't remember hearing the Astros banging on trash cans at Minute Maid Park during his nine big league seasons, all with the Angels in the AL West.

"I noticed the banging off the bat from center field," Trout said. "It just feels like they weren't missing pitches. It's frustrating, because you have guys coming in here battling every day and working on stuff. ... I can't imagine what the pitchers feel like. It's a mental game. You go in a stretch where you're doing good, and you go into Houston and get banged up, it could mentally drain you."

Trout didn't make a suggestion for what the Astros players' punishment should have been, but the scandal obviously touched a nerve in the Halos' brilliant center fielder, who has spent his entire career trying to outwit the Astros.

"Obviously the GM got fired and Hinch got fired," Trout said of punishments for Jeff Luhnow and manager AJ Hinch. "But the players getting nothing, that's definitely not right, for sure."

"I think everybody wants it to be a clean, level playing field," Trout added. "I didn't know it wasn't until this stuff came out, and then you realize when we played at them at (Houston) or whatever, they were hitting a lot of balls. They've got a lot of great players over there for sure, but it was something different."

Anthony Rendon also reported to his new team Monday, but the Angels' new \$245 million third baseman was more circumspect in his thoughts on the Astros, his hometown team.

"Everyone is quick to hammer them down and just kill them," Rendon said. "But at the end of the day, we've got to look at ourselves in the mirror, and we're not perfect people. Whether it's a speeding ticket or whatever it might be, some of us are trying to get an edge some way or another in life. They happened to get caught for doing it. You can forgive them, but doesn't mean you have to forget."

Rendon has spent his career in the National League. His Washington Nationals beat Houston in a seven-game World Series last year.

"Even when I watched their games over the previous years,

Brady, Pats have 'no movement' on contract talks



NEW ENGLAND (AP)—

With Tom Brady just one month away from NFL free agency, the New England Patriots haven't made progress toward a potential contract extension with their longtime star, according to a report on Sunday.

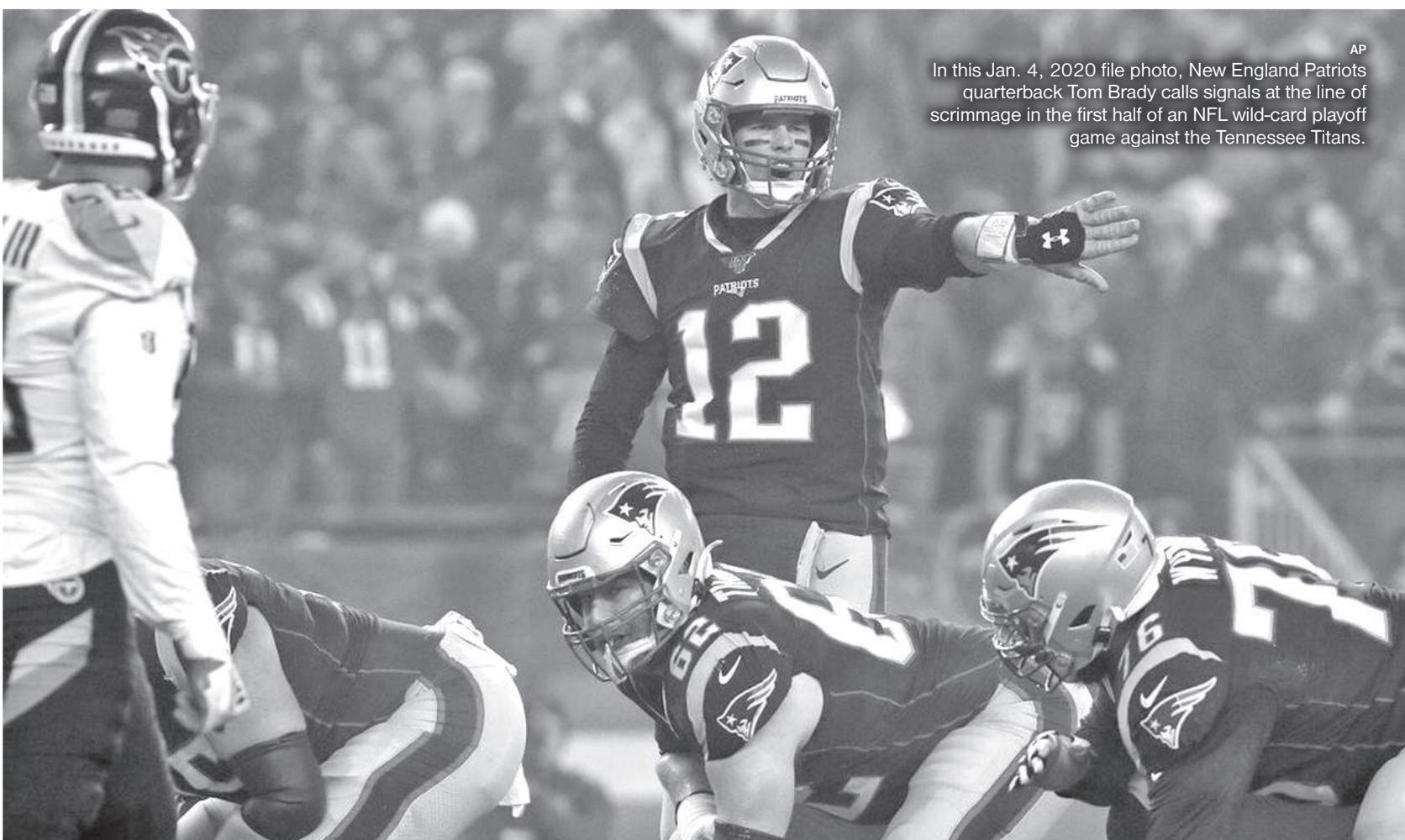
The two sides have had "no movement" on talks related to a new deal, ESPN reported. Brady has spent his entire 20-year career with the Patriots.

Brady and his representatives can begin negotiating with other teams on March 16, when the NFL's "legal tampering" window begins. NFL free agency begins on March 18. Brady's existing deal with the Patriots is void on that date, and the Patriots are unable to apply the franchise tag to keep him due to a clause in his last contract.

At present, it's unclear if Brady will prioritize a financial windfall or a chance at another Super Bowl when free agency begins.

The Patriots are willing to pay Brady more than \$30 million per season to retain his services, the NFL Network reported earlier this month. At the same time, Brady reportedly wants a commitment that the team would surround him with offensive weapons before he would return.

The Patriots are just one of several teams expected to have an interest in Brady. Rumored destinations for the six-time Super Bowl champion include the Las Vegas Raiders, the Los Angeles Chargers and the Indianapolis Colts.



In this Jan. 4, 2020 file photo, New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady calls signals at the line of scrimmage in the first half of an NFL wild-card playoff game against the Tennessee Titans. AP

AB to talk to teams at NFL combine

Former Pittsburgh Steelers receiver Antonio Brown wants back into the NFL. Brown said he plans to meet with teams at the NFL combine in hopes to "get things back on the right page."

The 31-year-old Brown appeared in just one game last season due to both behavior and off-the-field issues. After the New England Patriots cut Brown in September, no other team picked him up, casting doubt on his NFL future.

Over his first nine seasons

in the NFL, Brown emerged as the best receiver in football. He made seven Pro Bowls and was named to four All-Pro teams over that period. He was on pace to threaten some significant NFL records.

But his actions off the field have threatened that future. Brown forced his way out of Oakland after getting into spats with Jon Gruden and Mike Mayock. He was picked up by the Patriots, played in one game and was then cut by the team after he was accused of rape by a former trainer.

Since that accusation, Brown has also been accused of sexual misconduct by a different woman, had police called on him after a domestic dispute with the mother of his children, and was charged with burglary and battery after an incident with the driver of a moving truck.

Following the moving truck incident, Brown has gone on an apology tour, attempting to make things right with people in the NFL. He has already apologized to the Steelers and quarterback Ben Roethlisberger.

Given Brown's talent, at

least a few teams could take him up on his combine offer. Whether those teams actually sign Brown depends on whether they believe Brown is truly trying to get his life back on track.

Even then, the rape and sexual misconduct allegations may prove too much for NFL teams to ignore.

Meanwhile, the Cardinals secured their starting quarterback with the first pick of the 2019 draft, but they're still working on who will fill out the depth chart behind Kyler Murray.

One option joined the team

earlier this month when the Cardinals signed former Winnipeg Blue Bombers quarterback Chris Streveler as a free agent. Streveler joins the Cardinals after helping his CFL team win the Grey Cup with a performance that saw him complete all three of his pass attempts for 39 yards and a touchdown, run nine times for 30 yards and make a 13-yard catch.

That usage calls to mind the way the Saints used Taysom Hill in 2019 and Cardinals General Manager Steve Keim didn't shy away from that comparison.



LOS ANGELES (AP)—The red shirt. A late tee time on Sunday.

All the ingredients were in place for Tiger Woods at Riviera except for the location. The closest he came to the leaders was when they were making birdie on the par-5 opening hole and Woods was 100 yards away—with a much larger following—as he was about to three-putt the par-5 11th for another bogey.

The closest he got to the winner was on the 18th green to hand the Genesis Invitational trophy to Adam Scott, who held his nerve and holed all the right putts on a course so difficult no one could do better than 68.

Woods finished 68th out of 68 players who made the cut. Only three other times in his career has he posted a 72-hole score higher than his 295 at Riviera, and the most recent was nearly seven years ago. He was 22 shots behind the leader, the widest margin for Woods since the 2015 Memo-

Easy for Woods to find perspective even after finishing last

rial, which also was last time he finished last.

So it wasn't a good week. It's not the end of the world, either.

Riviera was another reminder that Woods is going to struggle from time to time, and this would be the place for that to happen. Woods never played Riviera that well when he was at his best, which explains why he ran his professional record to 0-12 on the fabled course off Sunset Boulevard.

Think back to Woods at his absolute best. During a stretch from late 1999 until the Masters in 2000, Woods won or was runner-up in 10 out of 11 events on the PGA Tour.

The exception? A tie for 18th at Riviera.

He probably wouldn't even be playing if not for Hyundai taking over as title sponsor and wisely signing up Woods' foundation to run it, and the PGA Tour elevating the status

of the event in line with Arnold Palmer at Bay Hill and Jack Nicklaus at Muirfield Village.

The difference is Palmer bought and nurtured Bay Hill. Nicklaus built Muirfield Village. Woods went 12 years without playing Riviera, a course he loves but for some reason could never play well.

"I have historically never putted really well here," he said going into the tournament.

He finished with 117 putts over four rounds, including a four-putt and a three-putt in the same round. He was 67th in the key putting statistic, which stands out even more considering only 68 players made the cut.

Is it alarming? Not at all. A year ago, Wood started his year in the Pacific chill of Torrey Pines and finished 11 shots behind. He was eight shots behind at Riviera and 13 behind in his debut at Chapultepec for the Mexico

Championship. Then, he skipped Bay Hill when his body didn't feel quite right and he wanted a week of rest.

So he wound up playing five times before the Masters, and it worked out well for him in the end.

Woods was planning to be in Mexico this week for the first World Golf Championship of the year until canceling his hotel room at the last minute and choosing not to enter on Friday.

"The idea is to peak around Augusta time," he said. "I just felt I wasn't going to be ready for next week -- a little rundown and playing at altitude as well isn't going to help that. So take the week off."

Yes, he is passing on a 72-man field with no cut and probably free points for the world ranking (he fell to No. 9), Ryder Cup and FedEx Cup. It's one of several big events on the calendar. It won't hurt him to miss. Where he shows up next is

play about the same amount. ... I won't play a lot more than that just because of the physical toll and I want to stay out here for just a little bit longer."

Something else he said Sunday suggested Woods has a different outlook from those watching and cheering him. Yes, he wants to get to No. 83 in career wins and set the PGA Tour record. Majors matter the most, and he hasn't given up to the chase to 18 to catch Jack Nicklaus.

But that Masters title was big. He won a major again. His family was there. If that's all there is, that's plenty.

Because even after a bad week at Riviera, he never lost perspective.

"This part of my career really didn't exist a few years ago," he said. "So to be able to do that no matter what I shooting, it's still disappointing. It's still frustrating. I'm still a little ticked. But also look at it from a perspective which I didn't do most of my career, that I have a chance to play going down the road."

Injuries overshadow good news for USMNT

NEW YORK—Injuries are a fact of life in professional and international sports, and sometimes they all seem to happen at once. That's certainly the case this week, as a number of U.S. men's national team regulars found themselves sidelined with various ailments.

Each ranged in severity and impact on the USMNT. But with the Americans' next set of games now just over a month away, the timing and overall volume has to be concerning for coach Gregg Berhalter, to the point where the bad news couldn't help overshadow some genuinely encouraging developments regarding two other players who found themselves back on the field for their European clubs.

Here's the latest on several key members of Berhalter's squad.

Sidelined for six months with a hamstring injury, Tim Weah re-injured himself mere minutes after coming on as a substitute in his Lille return during Sunday's 2-1 loss to Marseille.

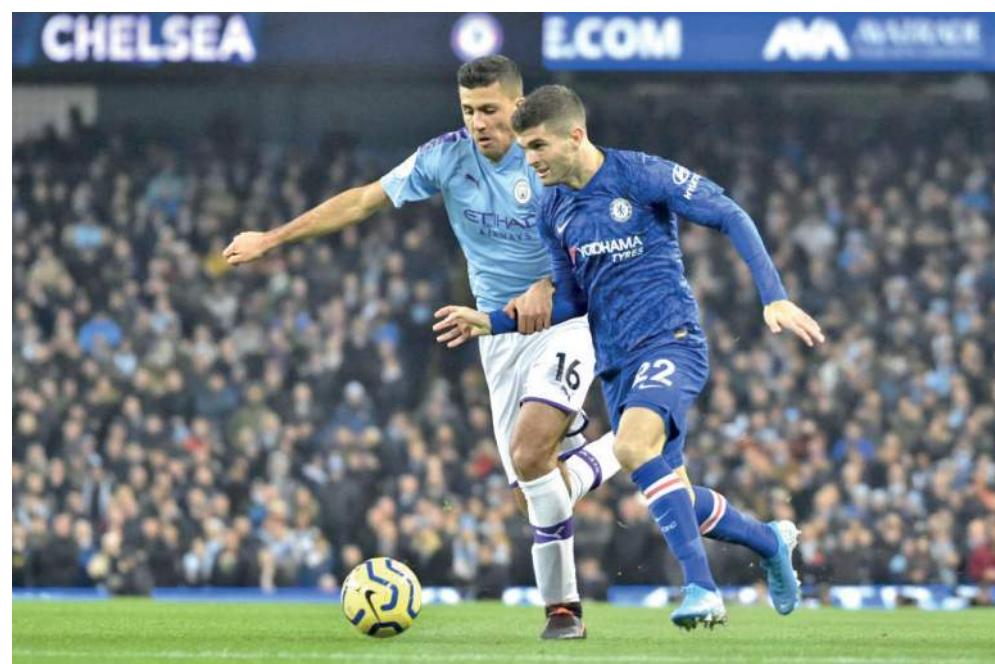
With veteran winger Paul Arriola also injured, Weah's odds of seeing the field for the



USMNT for the first time under Berhalter in next month's friendlies against the Netherlands and Wales felt good. Now that's up in the air once again for Weah, who will turn 20 Saturday.

Tyler Adams turned 21 on Valentine's Day, but it wasn't a happy occasion. A few days after helping second-place Leipzig earn a point at Bundesliga leaders Bayern Munich, the club announced that Adams—who missed the first half of the campaign with groin and foot problems would sit out Saturday's match against Werder Bremen (a 3-0 win) plus Tuesday's Champions League trip to Tottenham because of a calf injury.

You have to feel for Adams. You also have to have some perspective: While the timing stinks for an ascendant talent who has been utterly snakebitten over the last year, this prognosis is good news, relatively speaking. Barring any setback, the New York native should be good to go well ahead of the decisive March 10 return match with Spurs (not to mention the national



team's games a couple weeks later).

While the word on Adams isn't bad, the same can't be said for Arriola, who suffered a serious knee injury Saturday in a preseason match against Orlando City.

The Washington Post reported Sunday that Arriola has a partially torn ACL. Now, that's obviously not as bad as a full tear. But it could still render him unavailable for country and club well into the

summer, which would rule him out of the semis and final of the CONCACAF Nations League in June. For a player who has emerged as a consistent two-way presence on the wings and a key dressing room leader, it's a bigger blow than many realize.

Chelsea manager Frank Lampard said Friday that the adductor injury that has kept Christian Pulisic out since New Year's Day would also prevent him from participat-

ing in Monday's high-profile clash with Manchester United.

The silver lining is that America's top talent is back training with the Blues under-23 side, with the hope that he could rejoin Chelsea's first team for this weekend's match against London rival Spurs or next week's daunting Champions League tangle with Bayern.

Duane Holmes had been the form of his career heading into Saturday's Championship meeting with Huddersfield but

In this Nov. 23, 2019 file photo, Manchester City's Rodrigo vies for the ball with Chelsea's Christian Pulisic, right, during the English Premier League soccer match between Manchester City and Chelsea at Etihad stadium in Manchester, England. AP

lasted only 29 minutes before limping off with an ankle injury.

The 25-year-old was scheduled for an MRI on Monday but Derby had not made the results public yet. Still, any time on the sidelines would be unfortunate for the hard-running Holmes, who is looking for his first USMNT invite in almost a year next month.

With the nagging knee problem that has kept Zack Steffen out since December continuing to linger, the 24-year-old loanee traveled to England last week to have the injury assessed by doctors from parent club Manchester City.

This situation has become worrying in a hurry. One because of Steffen's age, but also because after 35-year-old No. 2 Brad Guzan, the U.S. goalkeeper pool is as shallow as it's been at any point in the last three decades.

SCC Golf Tournament set for April 4

THE 2020 SAIPAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE GOLF TOURNAMENT will hit the greens and fairways of the Laolao Bay Golf & Resort on April 4.

The annual tournament will have a two-man scramble format. Men and women of different skill levels and talents all have a chance at some amazing cash prizes: \$1,000 for first place, \$700 for second, and \$500 for third place in the team gross and team double peoria categories.

There will also be cash prizes for closest-to-the-pin,

aggressive drive, and accurate drive contests. In addition to these prizes, golfers will enjoy complimentary swag bags courtesy of the Chamber members as well as on-course snacks and refreshments.

Showtime is at 6am with a shotgun start at 7am. The general registration fee is \$120 per person (\$240/team). Chamber members and their scramble partner will enjoy a discounted fee of \$110/member (\$220/team). The awards banquet and raffle will immediately follow after the tournament.

Proceeds of the event are

instrumental in supporting all of the Chamber's current and future programs. Initiatives such as scholarship program and professional development trainings as well as future initiatives around entrepreneurship and workforce development are integral to sustaining the private sector.

Fabulous raffle prizes have been donated and tickets will be available for purchase during registration and awards banquet. Sponsorships and raffle prizes are currently being collected. Registration forms for players are available for download at www.saipanchamber.com/events. (PR)

saipanchamber.com/events, at the Chamber office, and at Laolao Bay Golf & Resort's front desk.

The Chamber is pleased to have the support of its generous members and looks forward to offering new programs to enhance the business community on Saipan in the upcoming year.

For more information about the event, visit Chamber's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/saipanchamber or its office at the Marianas Business Plaza Room #315 (Susupe), or contact Franco Santos at 670-234-7150 or coordinator@saipanchamber.com. (PR)

ing to Kim in the semis, Sikkel won over Seiyul Hong, 6-1, 6-1.

Chung, on the other hand, swept Seo Hee Lee, 6-0, 6-0, and Hoo Wang, 6-1, 6-2, to bag the finals ticket at the bottom half of the draw. Wang earlier arranged a semis match over Chung after booting out Yebin Shin, 6-1, 6-2.

In the girls U12 singles, Serin's sister, Irin, defeated Anna Kwon in finals, 6-2, 6-0. Irin also had an easy semis assignment, as she topped Jeong Bin Park in straight sets, 6-0, 6-0. Park advanced to the Final Four round against Irin following a 6-2, 6-0 triumph over Isa Nishitani.

Kwon, before losing to Irin, dominated Ellie Cho, 6-0, 6-1, and Hannae Chae, 6-1, 6-2.

IMPRESSIVE

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The club official is looking forward to more success from the two young swimmers, as they have been consistently showing improvements since joining the group just a couple of years ago.

Barman started swimming when she was 6 years old and was named to Kimura's special reinforcement selection class in 2018. On the same year, she won the high point award in the SSC International Meet and also performed well in the Guam meet last month. Ma was also part of Tsunami Saipan's special reinforcement selection class and earned Top 3 finishes in the Guam competition.

Batallones, Watanabe lauded

Meanwhile, Kimura also recognized the notable perfor-

mances of Maria Batallones and Kouki Watanabe in last weekend's ocean swim.

Both raced in the 3K event and led the finishers list. The 11-year-old Batallones timed in at 37:14 to beat six other swimmers and was the lone finisher to complete the course under 40 minutes. Watanabe, who is also 11 years old, broke the 40-minute mark, too, after checking in at 38:07 and beating nine other swimmers.

"They had nice results as they even defeated adult swimmers," Kimura said.

Overall, Kimura said they are pleased to compete in an ocean swim again after missing some races in the last two years and they hope to participate in more events this season.

"We deeply appreciate SSC, coach Richard Sikkel, and Kanoa Resort for giving us the great opportunity to do the ocean swim again," Kimura said.

score sheets are released.

Only the Top 10 teams after the elimination round will advance to the playoffs, which is set for March 13 and 14 and will also feature Tinian and Rota squads.

SSHS 34—Deleon Guerrero 10, Villarin 9, Pangelinan 6, Cruz 5, Matalog 2, Manglona 2.

KHS Varsity 19—Fitipol 6, A. Agulto 5, Indalecio 3, Sablan 3, Cruz 2.

Scoring by halves: 15-5, 34-19.



ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Elizabeth Culp eyes a backhand return to Lydia Tan during their title match in the women's singles event in the 2020 White Coconut Tennis Classic last Monday at the American Memorial Park tennis courts.

MANTA

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the north court, while an all-MHS duel (MHS 3 vs MHS JV) was played on the south side. In the second game on the north court, KHS JV met MHS Varsity, while Mt. Carmel Varsity challenged KHS 3 on the south court.

For the last match on the north court, Mt. Carmel 2 collided with Agape Christian School and results of the game along with the four earlier tiffs will be reported once official



Raptors, Heat, Grizzlies and Thunder in good place

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Saipan Tribune Sports

MLB stars hammer Manfred over 'piece of metal' trophy crack

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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Manta Rays on a roll



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Saipan Southern High School's Gregory Deleon Guerrero, center, takes off for a shot against Kagman High School Varsity's Anthony Agulto, left, and Miguel Fitipol during the second half of their game in the 2019-2020 Public School System Interscholastic Boys High School Basketball League yesterday at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Saipan Southern High School extended its winning streak to four following a 34-19 victory over Kagman High School Varsity in the 2019-2020 Public School System Interscholastic Boys High School Basketball League yesterday at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

 Gregory Deleon Guerrero and Ervin Villarin combined for more than half of the Manta Rays' total output to keep the team's perfect record in the elimination round. Deleon Guerrero scored 10 points, while Villarin chipped in 9. Devon Pangelinan and John Paul Cruz also contributed to SSHS' cause, adding 6 and 5 markers, respectively.

Deleon Guerrero delivered bulk of his points in the first half, as he posted 8 to give the Manta Rays a precarious lead at the break, 15-14. KHS Varsity managed to keep up with Saipan Southern behind Miguel Fitipol and Anthony Agulto, who logged 4 points apiece in the first 12 minutes of play.

After failing to gain enough cushion in the opening half, the Manta Rays were able

to widen the gap early in the second—thanks to Cruz's 5 straight points. Pangelinan and Villarin then took over in the remaining minutes of the second half to hand Saipan Southern the double-digit winning margin.

Meanwhile, five other

games were scheduled yesterday at the continuation of the elimination round of the 12-team competition.

Saipan International School and Da'ok Academy were set to duel in the curtain-raiser on

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Impressive debut for Tsunami Saipan members



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Swimming Center Tsunami Saipan's Sari Barman, right, and Justin Ma pose with their medals after winning their debut in the 2020 Meek & Mighty Ocean Swim held in the waters off Kanoa Resort in Susupe last Saturday.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Swimming Center Tsunami Saipan members Sari Barman and Justin Ma delivered in their debut in the 2020 Meek & Mighty Ocean Swim held in the waters off Kanoa Resort in Susupe last Saturday.

(22:34), Nagi Tenorio (22:44), and Kaori Takahashi (23:31).

Justin Ma also did the 1K event and had the fastest time in the entire field in route to ruling the boys competition. He finished the course in 14:59 to beat Tsunami Saipan teammate Kaito Rechucher (15:54) and SSC's Tristan Raho (15:59).

"It was their (Sari and Justin) first time to do ocean swim and both swam aggressively. I am so proud of them because they did not only finish first in the division, but also got fast times," Tsunami Saipan coach Hiro Kimura said.

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ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Lydia Tan steps forward for a return to Elizabeth Culp during their game in the women's singles finals in the 2020 White Coconut Tennis Classic last Monday at the American Memorial Park tennis courts.

Triumphant return for Tan

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Former CNMI National Tennis Team member Lydia Tan found success in her return to singles competition in the 2020 White Coconut Tennis Classic.

Tan, who donned the Commonwealth colors in the 2010 Micronesian Games in Palau, joined the women's open singles event in Northern Mariana Islands Tennis Association's second tournament for the season and ruled the division. She clinched the championship last Monday after sweeping Elizabeth Culp, 6-1, 6-4, in their finals duel at the American Memorial Park



tennis courts.

Last weekend's tournament was the first time in more than five years that Tan played in a singles event so the title victory was unexpected.

The No. 1 seed Tan reached the championship match after blanking Seon Hee Kim last Saturday, 6-0, 6-0, while Culp, who was seeded No. 2 in the seven-player field, advanced to the finale following a 6-1, 6-2 win over Yuko Kumada. Culp earlier also took only two sets to beat Ella Kim, 6-1, 6-1 and move into the Final Four, while Kumada ousted Sarka Jambor, 6-2, 6-3, to set up a semis game

See TAN on Page 27